THE

YOUNG DUKE.

"A moral tale, though gay."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "VIVIAN GREY."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BOOK THE FOURTH.



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CHAP. I.

THE arrival of the two distinguished foreigners re-animated the dying season. All vied in testifying their consideration, and the Duke of St. James exceeded all. He took them to see the alterations at Hauteville House, which no one had yet witnessed; and he asked their opinion of his furniture, which no one had yet decided on. Two *fêtes* in the same week established, as well as maintained, his character as the Archduke of fashion. Remembering, however, the agreeable month which he had spent in the

kingdom of John the Twenty-fourth, he was reminded with annoyance, that his confusion at Hauteville prevented him from receiving his friends *en grand seigneur* in his hereditary castle. Metropolitan magnificence, which, if the *parvenu* could not equal, he at least could imitate, seemed a poor return for the feudal splendour and imperial festivity of an Hungarian magnate. While he was brooding over these reminiscences, it suddenly occurred to him, that he had never made a progress into his western territories. Pen Bronnock Palace was the boast of Cornwall, though its Lord had never paid it a visit. The Duke of St. James sent for Sir Carte Blanche.

Besides entertaining the foreign nobles, the young Duke could no longer keep off the constantly recurring idea, that something must be done to entertain himself. He shuddered to think where and what he should have been, had not these gentlemen so providentially arrived. As for again repeating the farce of last

year, he felt that it would no longer raise a smile. Yorkshire he shunned. Doncaster made him tremble. A week with the Duke of Burlington at Marringworth; a fortnight with the Fitz-pompeys at Malthorpe; a month with the Graftons at Cleve; and so on—he shuddered at the very idea. Who can see a Pantomime more than once? Who could survive a Pantomime the twentieth time? All the shifting scenes, and flitting splendour; all the motley crowds of sparkling characters; all the quick changes, and full variety, are, once, enchantment. But when the splendour is discovered to be monotony; the change, order, and the caprice, a system; when the characters play even the same part, and the variety never varies;—how dull, how weary, how infinitely flat, is such a world to that man who requires from its converse, not occasional relaxation, but constant excitement!

Pen Bronnock was a new object. At this moment in his life, novelty was indeed a treasure. If he could cater for a month, no ex-

pense should be grudged: as for the future, he thrust it from his mind. By taking up his residence, too, at Pen Bronnock, he escaped from all invitations,—and so, in a word, the worthy Knight received orders to make all preparations at the Palace for the reception of a large party in the course of three weeks.

Sir Carte, as usual, did wonders. There was, fortunately for his employer, no time to build or paint, but some dingy rooms were hung with scarlet cloth; cart-loads of new furniture were sent down; the theatre was re-burnished; the stables put in order; and, what was of infinitely more importance in the estimation of all Englishmen, the neglected pile was "well aired."

CHAPTER II.

I THINK—at least, I think I think; for I have been too often wrong to be ever sure, and never back my opinion with a bet, the only test. But I do think, that we have had some very agreeable *villeggiaturas* in these immortal volumes. For, how do I know that they are not immortal? Fame is half an accident. I always hope the best; and if I be wrong, why then, I must put up instead with three months' praise, and some slight profit. Our re-unions too, have, I trust, been various in their character as well as in their number. I never take the reader into the country merely for change of air; but because at differ-

ent houses, one sometimes catches a different trait. The politician and the sportsman, and the fashionist, have all their caste; and although in the blending of society, these characters often meet, still at their mansions, and particularly in the provinces, the ruling passion will predominate. Men pass their autumns, some in slaughtering birds,—some in retailing the faded graces of the faded spring,—some in anticipating the coming struggles of the approaching Houses. And such is life! What is? Heaven knows, not I! Philosophers have preached, and vowed that human life is the simplest compound, except clear water, that e'er was offered for the draught of man; but I must say, who always speak the truth when I can get clear of lies, which is difficult, for, in this world, they are like the air we breathe,—without them, we should die: I say, that I have been very desirous of discovering the mysteries of our beings and our wills,—and what have I gained? A clouded genius, and an aching head.

For life, I am clear, is no simple cate, mild in its flavour, easy of digestion, but a made dish — sometimes perhaps a calf's-head surprised. Its ardent sauces, and its fragrant spices; its skin and bone; its richness and its leanness, are all so many different tastes and morsels, which are, unhappily, unfairly served. And so one vows the dinner is right good, while others execrate the bungling cook; but for my part, although I don't complain, I care but little for this early course, and if not served exactly as I wish, console myself for the unsavory fare, by the anticipation of the dessert.

We are in the country, and such a country, that even in Italy I think of thee, native Hesperia! Here, myrtles grow, and fear no blasting North, or blighting East. Here the South wind blows with that soft breath, which brings the bloom to flesh. Here, the land breaks in gentle undulations; and here, blue waters kiss a verdant shore. Hail! to thy thousand bays,

and deep-red earth, thy marble quarries, and thy silver veins! Hail! to thy far-extending landscape, whose sparkling villages and streaky fields no clime can match!

Some gales I owe to thee of balmy breath, some gentle hours when life had fewest charms. And I am grateful for all this—to say nothing of your cider and your junkets.

The Duke arrived just as the setting sun crowned the proud palace with his gleamy rays. It was a pile which the immortal Inigo had raised in sympathy with the taste of a noble employer, who had passed his earliest years in Lombardy. Of stone, and sometimes even of marble, with pediments and balustrades, and ornamented windows, and richly chased key-stones, and flights of steps, and here and there a statue, the structure was quite Palladian, though a little dingy, and, on the whole, very imposing.

There were suites of rooms, which had no end, and staircases which had no beginning.

In this vast pile, nothing was more natural than to lose your way,--an agreeable amusement on a rainy morning. There was a collection of pictures, very various,—by which phrase we understand, not select. Yet they were amusing; and the Canalettis were unrivalled. There was a regular ball-room, and a theatre; so resources were at hand. The scenes, though dusty, were numerous; and the Duke had provided new dresses. The park was not a park; by which I mean, that it was rather a chase than the highly-finished enclosure which we associate with the first title. In fact, Pen Bronnock Chase was the right name of the settlement; but some monarch travelling, having been seized with a spasm, recruited his strength under the roof of his loyal subject, then the chief seat of the House of Hauteville, and having in his urgency been obliged to hold a privy council there, the supreme title of palace was assumed by right.

The domain was bounded on one side by

the sea; and here a yacht, and some slight craft, rode at anchor, in a small green bay, and offered an opportunity for the adventurous, and a refuge for the wearied. When you have been bored for an hour or two on earth, it sometimes is a change to be bored for an hour or two on water.

The house was soon full, and soon gay. The guests, and the means of amusing them, were equally numerous. But this was no common *villeggiatura*,—no visit to a family with their regular pursuits and matured avocations. The host was as much a guest as any other. The young Duke appointed Lord Squib master of the ceremonies, and gave orders for nothing but constant excitement. Constant excitement his Lordship managed to maintain, for he was experienced, clever, careless, and gay, and, for once in his life, had the command of unbounded resources. He ordered, he invented, he prepared, and he expended. They acted, they danced, they hunted, they sailed, they feasted,

they masqueraded; and when they began to get a little wearied of themselves, and their own powers of diversion gradually vanished, then a public ball was given twice a-week at the palace, and all the West of England invited. New faces brought new ideas; new figures brought new fancies. All were delighted with the young Duke, — and flattery from novel quarters will for a moment whet even the appetite of the satiated. Simplicity, too, can interest. There were some Misses Gayweather who got unearthed, who never had been at London, though nature had given them sparkling eyes and springing persons. This tyranny was too bad. Papa was quizzed, Mamma flattered, and the daughters' simplicity amused these young lordlings. Rebellion was whispered in the small ears of the Gayweathers. The little heads too of the Gayweathers were turned. They were the constant butt, and the constant resource, of every lounging dandy.

The Bird of Paradise also arranged her

professional engagements, so as to account with all possible propriety for her professional visit at Pen Bronnock. The musical meeting at Exeter over, she made her appearance, and some concerts were given, which electrified all Cornwall. Count Frill was very strong here; though, to be sure, he also danced, and acted, in all varieties. He was the soul, too, of a masqued ball; but when complimented on his accomplishments, and thanked for his exertions, he modestly depreciated his worth, and panegyrized the dancing-dogs.

As for the Prince, on the whole, he maintained his silence; but it was at length discovered by the fair sex, that he was not stupid, but sentimental. When this was made known, he rather lost ground with the brown sex, who, before thinking him thick, had vowed that he was a devilish good fellow; but now, being really envious, had their tale and hint, their sneer and sly joke. M. de Whiskerburg had one active accomplishment — this was his

dancing. His gallopade was declared to be divine: he absolutely sailed in air. His waltz, at his will, either melted his partner into a dream, or whirled her into a frenzy! Dangerous M. de Whiskerburg!

CHAPTER III.

It is said, that the conduct of refined society, in a literary point of view, is, on the whole, productive but of slight interest; that all we can aspire to is, to trace a brilliant picture of brilliant manners; and that when the dance and the festival have been duly inspired by the repartee and the sarcasm, and the gem, the robe, and the plume adroitly lighted up by the lamp and the lustre, our cunning is exhausted. And so your novelist generally twists this golden thread with some substantial silken cord, for use, and works up, with the light dance, and with the heavy dinner, some secret marriage, or some shrouded murder. And

thus, by English plots and German mysteries, the page trots on, or jolts, till, in the end, Justice will have her way, — and the three volumes are completed.

A plan both good, antique, and popular, but not my way. I prefer trusting to the slender incidents which spring from out our common intercourse; and if these fail, and our skiff hangs fire, why, then, I moralize on great affairs, or indulge in some slight essay on my own defects.

There is no doubt that that great pumice-stone, Society, smooths down the edges of your thoughts and manners. Bodies of men, who pursue the same object, must ever resemble each other: the life of the majority must ever be imitation. Thought is a labour to which few are competent; and truth requires for its developement as much courage as acuteness. So conduct becomes conventional, and opinion is a legend; and thus all men act and think alike.

But this is not peculiar to what is called

fashionable life — it is peculiar to civilization, which gives the passions less to work upon. Mankind are not more heartless because they are clothed in ermine; it is, that their costume attracts us to their characters, and we stare because we find the prince or the peeress neither a conqueror nor a heroine. The great majority of human beings, in a country like England, glide through existence in perfect ignorance of their natures, so complicated and so controlling is the machinery of our social life! Few can break the bonds that tie them down, and struggle for self-knowledge; fewer, when the talisman is gained, can direct their illuminated energies to the purposes with which they sympathize.

A mode of life, which encloses in its circle all the dark and deep results of unbounded indulgence, however it may appear to some who glance over the sparkling surface, does not exactly seem to me one either insipid or uninteresting to the moral speculator; and, indeed,

I have long been induced to suspect, that the seeds of true sublimity lurk in a life which, like this book, is half fashion and half passion.

Not that they will germinate here, for the seed, to rise, requires the burning sunbeam and the moistening shower; and passions, to be put in action, demand a more blazing brain, and bubbling pulse, than heat my torpid soul. In the mean time, I drop the hint for others, and proceed to sketch a feeling, or to catch a trait.

I know not how it was, but about this time an unaccountable, almost an imperceptible coolness seemed to spring up between our hero and the Lady Aphrodite. If I were to puzzle my brains for ever, I could not give you the reason. Nothing happened—nothing had been said or done, which could indicate its origin. Perhaps this *was* the origin; perhaps the Duke's conduct had become, though unexceptionable, too negative. But here I only throw up a straw. Perhaps, if I must go on suggesting, anxiety ends in callousness.

His Grace had thought so much of her feelings, that he had quite forgotten his own, or worn them out. Her Ladyship, too, was perhaps a little disappointed at the unexpected reconciliation. When we have screwed our courage up to the sticking point, we like not to be baulked. Both, too, perhaps—I go on *perhapsing*—both, too, I repeat, perhaps, could not help mutually viewing each other as the cause of much mutual care and mutual anxiousness. Both, too, perhaps, were a little tired—but without knowing it. The most curious thing, and which would have augured worst to a calm judge, was, that they silently seemed to agree not to understand that any alteration had really taken place between them, which, I think, was a bad sign:—because a lover's quarrel, we all know, like a storm in summer, portends a renewal of warm weather or ardent feelings; and a lady is never so well seated in her admirer's heart, as when those letters are interchanged which express so much, and those explanations entered upon which explain so little.

After all, I may be mistaken, and they may be on the very best terms. Time alone can show, which can do all things, even write this book, which whether it ever be written or not, is doubtful, and also not of the slightest importance. Yet 'tis agreeable to find this certain existence, in all other respects, one great uncertainty. Where we may be to-morrow, or what do, is just a mystery. For aught we know, the world may end. Now, think one moment on that single line. Methinks I hear the restless brooding of the panting waters. What a catastrophe!

And should not this, my friends, teach us well not to think over-much of coming days, and more, much more, of ourselves? From ourselves all those feelings spring, and in ourselves all centre, which are our happiness. There is that within us, duly competent, whatever be our lot in life, to fulfil its divine and beautiful ordination, and each man might be, if he chose, without a care. But we will not listen to the monitor,—we fly from the Delphi of our breasts,

and we aspire after all science, but that knowledge which alone can be perfect.

Alas! alas! for fallen man! Would—would that I could raise him! And sometimes, as I pace my lonely hall, I will not quite despair, but dare to muse o'er things I will not whisper. But soon the glow flies from my faded cheek, and soon my fluttering pulse subsides again to languor. The drooping pen falls from my powerless hand, and I feel—I keenly feel myself what indeed I am——far the most prostrate of a fallen race!

Could I recall the power, when, like a conqueror from a mountain height, I gazed upon a new and opening world, I would dare the trial. Ah! if our energy and our experience were born but twins, we should be Gods! As it is, we are, at the best, but Titans, and so get crushed, as is but just.

There is no characteristic of this age of steel to me more fearful, than its total neglect of moral philosophy. And here I would dilate on

greater things than some imagine; but, unfortunately, I am engaged. For Newmarket calls Sir Lucius and his friends. We will not join them, having lost enough. His Grace half promised to be one of the party; but when the day came, just remembered the Shropshires were expected, and so was very sorry, — and the rest. Lady Aphrodite and himself parted with a warmth which remarkably contrasted with their late intercourse, and which neither of them could decide, whether it were reviving affection or factitious effort.

M. de Whiskerburg and Count Frill departed with Sir Lucius, being extremely desirous to be initiated in the mysteries of the turf, and, above all, to see a real English jockey.

CHAPTER IV.

The newspapers continued to announce the departures of new visitors to the Duke of St. James, and to dilate upon the protracted and princely festivity of Pen Bronnock. But while thousands were envying his lot, and hundreds aspiring to share it, what indeed was the condition of our hero?

A month or two had rolled on, and if he had not absolutely tasted enjoyment, at least he had thrust off reflection; but as the autumn wore away, and as each day he derived less diversion or distraction from the repetition of the same routine, carried on by different actors, he could no longer control feelings which would be pre-

dominant, and those feelings were not such as perhaps might have been expected from one who was receiving the homage of an admiring world. In a word, the Duke of St. James was the most miserable wretch that ever treated.

"Where is this to end?" he asked himself. "Is this year to close, to bring only a repetition of the past? Well! I have had it all—and what is it? My restless feelings are, at last, laid,—my indefinite appetites are, at length, exhausted. I have known this mighty world; and where am I? Once, all prospects, all reflections merged in the agitating, the tremulous and panting lust with which I sighed for it. Have I been deceived? Have I been disappointed? Is it different from what I expected? Has it fallen short of my fancy? Has the dexterity of my musings deserted me? Have I under-acted the hero of my reveries? Have I, in short, mismanaged my *début?* Have I blundered? No, no, no! Far—far has it gone

beyond even my imagination, and *my* life has, if no other, realized its ideas!

"Who laughs at me? Who does not burn incense before my shrine? What appetite have I not gratified? What gratification has proved bitter? My vanity! Has it been, for an instant, mortified? Am I not acknowledged the most brilliant hero of the most brilliant society in Europe? Intense as is my self-love, has it not been gorged? Luxury and splendour were my youthful dreams, and have I not realized the very romance of indulgence and magnificence? My career has been one long triumph. My palaces, and my gardens, and my jewels, my dress, my furniture, my equipages, my horses, and my festivals——these used to occupy my meditations, when I could only meditate——and have my determinations proved a delusion? Ask the admiring world!

"And now for the great point to which all this was to tend, which all this was to fascinate and subdue, to adorn, to embellish, to delight,

to honour——Woman! Oh! when I first dared, among the fields of Eton, to dwell upon the soft yet agitating fancy, that some day my existence might perhaps be rendered more intense, by the admiration of these maddening but then mysterious creatures——could—could I have dreamt of what has happened? Is not this the very point in which my career has most out-topped my lofty hopes?

"I have read, and sometimes heard, of SATIETY. It must then be satiety that I feel; for I do feel more like a doomed man, th... young noble full of blood and youth. And yet satiety——it is a word. What then? A word is breath, and am I wiser? Satiety! Satiety! Satiety! Oh! give me happiness! Oh! give me love!

"Ay! there it is — I feel it now. Too well I feel, that happiness must spring from purer fountains than self-love. We are not born merely for ourselves, and they who, full of pride, make the trial, as I have done, and

think that the world is made for them, and not for mankind, must come to as bitter results, perhaps as bitter a fate—for, by Heavens! I am half tempted at this moment to fling myself from off this cliff—and so end all.

"Why should I live? For virtue, and for duty — to compensate for all my folly, and to achieve some slight good end with my abused, and unparalleled means. Ay! it is all vastly rational, and vastly sublime, — but it is too late. I feel the exertion is above me. I am a lost man.

"We cannot work without a purpose and an aim. I had mine, although it was a false one, and I succeeded. Had I one now, I might succeed again — but my heart is a dull void. And Caroline — that gentle girl will not give me what I want; and to offer her but half a heart, may break her's, and I would not bruise that delicate bosom to save my dukedom. Those sad, silly parents of her's have already done mischief enough, — but I will see Darrell,

and will at least arrange that. I like him, and will make him my friend for her sake. God! God! why am I not loved! A word from her, and all would change. I feel a something in me, which could put all right. I have the will, and she could give the power.

"Now see what a farce life is! I shall go on, Heaven knows how! I cannot live long. Men like me soon bloom and fade. What I may come to, I dread to think. There is a dangerous facility in my temper — I know it well, for I know more of myself than people think — there is a dangerous facility which, with May Dacre, might be the best guarantee of virtue; but with all others—for all others are, at the best, weak things, will as certainly render me despicable, perhaps degraded. I hear the busy devil whispering even now. It is my demon. Now, I say, see what a farce life is! I shall die like a dog, as I have lived like a fool; and then my epitaph will be in everybody's mouth. Here are the consequences of self-indulgence: here is

a fellow, forsooth, who thought only of the gratification of his vile appetites—and by the living Heaven, am I not standing here among my hereditary rocks, and sighing to the ocean, to be virtuous!

"She knew me well: she read me in a minute, and spoke more truth at that last meeting, than is in a thousand sermons. It is out of our power to redeem ourselves. Our whole existence is a false, foul state, totally inimical to love and purity, and domestic gentleness, and calm delight. Yet are we envied! Oh! could these fools see us at any other time, except surrounded by our glitter, and hear of us at any other moment, save in the first bloom of youth, which is, even then, often wasted,—could they but mark our manhood, and view our hollow marriages, and disappointed passions,—could they but see the traitors, that we have for sons—the daughters that own no duty, —could they but watch us even to our grave, tottering after some fresh bauble, some vain

delusion, which, to the last, we hope may prove a substitute for what we have never found through life—a contented mind,—they would do something else but envy us.

"But I stand orating, when I am wanted. I must home. Home! Oh! sacred word! and then comes night! Horrible night! Horrible day! It seems to me I am upon the eve of some monstrous folly, too ridiculous to be a crime, and yet as fatal. I have half a mind to go and marry the Bird of Paradise, out of pure pique with myself, and with the world."

CHAPTER V.

SOUTHEY, that virtuous man, whom Wisdom calls her own, somewhere thanks God that he was not born to a great estate. I quite agree with the seer of Keswick: it is a bore. Provided a man can enjoy every personal luxury, what profits it that your flag waves on castles you never visit, and that you count rents which you never receive? And yet, there are some things which your miserable, moderate incomes cannot command, and which one might like to have—for instance, a band.

A complete, a consummate band, in uniforms of uncut white velvet, with a highly-wrought gold button, just tipped with a single pink

topaz, seems to me the τὸ καλὸν. When I die, "Band" will be found impressed upon my heart, like "frigate" on the core of Nelson. The negroes should have their noses bored, as well as their ears, and hung with rings of rubies. The kettle-drums should be of silver.

And with regard to a great estate, no doubt it brings great cares; or, to get free of them, the estate must be neglected, and then it is even worse. Elections come on, and all your members are thrown out: so much for neglected influence. Agricultural distress prevails, and all your farms are thrown up: so much for neglected tenants. Harassed by leases, renewals, railroads, fines, and mines, you are determined that life shall not be worn out by these continual and petty cares. Thinking it somewhat hard, that, because you have two hundred thousand a-year, you have neither ease nor enjoyment, you find a remarkably clever man, who manages every thing for you. Enchanted with his energy, his acuteness, and his fore-

sight; fascinated by your encreasing rent-roll, and the total disappearance of arrears, you dub him your right-hand, introduce him to all your friends, and put him into Parliament; and then, fired by the ambition of rivalling his patron, he disburses, embezzles, and decamps.

I do not know how it is, but it certainly seems that there is some malicious fiend, whose especial office it is to "play the devil" with our incomes. And from the Civil List down to my paltry purse, I doubt whether there be one who ever manages to get through the year without a scrape.

I, who am a votary of true Philosophy, and live on a "spare radish and an egg,"—I should be safe; and yet, when all seems winding up so fair, and, in an ecstasy of economical enthusiasm, I am just about to strike the triumphant balance, be assured, that moment, some horse that never went better than yesterday, falls lame, or some unexpected demand drops out of the skies, and quite deranges those cursed affairs that ever will go wrong.

Then I have got to draw, and, what is even worse, to write those vile explanatory epistles (I hate explanations) that are to prepare the victim for a demand, which, though unexpected, must be shown to be, in a manner, by no means unreasonable. What nice diplomacy!

I am sure, I don't know how it is; I am quite surprised. Every thing is reduced to a peace establishment. I have cut down every item that I promised. And really, I was just flattering myself that you would be so pleased at not hearing from me, when, in a manner which was most vexatious, I just discovered that I had made a mistake. If any extravagance were the cause, I should not care so much; but when, as you well know, my only object has been to keep things square, it is most annoying. One thing may console us,—I cannot live cheaper.

There is Antonio; you know Antonio well! He is quite a treasure, and really costs me nothing. Those Italians are most invaluable, and live on air. Then there is Luigi: I could

not do without Luigi, since you have taken away my English groom. He is quite my right-hand. I am sure Luigi is just the servant that you'd quite approve. Then there's my Greek: he is plump, to be sure, and lazy; but, *entre nous*, such a favourite with the sex, that his perquisites are so great, I mean to cut him down. I doubt whether my table costs me a sequin a week.

> "So, on my honour, Sir, as I'm a sinner,
> I rather gain than lose by every dinner."

Then there are my horses. As you desired it, I have cut down one; though, to be sure, as I have bought two more, there is no great saving yet upon that head. But I mean to breed. I find the fellows here will give a long figure for an English horse. I have got a mare from an officer at Malta; so we may consider this as part of our plan of retrenchment, and quite another account. Therefore, perhaps you will permit me to draw for this alone.

I give only five-and-twenty pounds a-year for my palace, and let out lodgings to an English family. I could not live in London in a garret for that price: therefore, you see I am saving desperately I fear, however, I must turn out my tenants. Their maids corrupt the morals of my men; and when I am scribbling something very fine, the little Tomkinses play at battledore.

I buy no pictures, cameos, or mosaics, and never patronize the *belli arte*. They think me here quite an ultra-montane, Sir. Lady Albania Silky vows she never saw one so barbarous, who was so clever.

I hope, therefore, that you will take into consideration the various topics I presume to hint. I flatter myself, that, upon reflection, you'll thank your stars the matter is no worse. Our friends, I hope, are well: my compliments to all. When next you write by the post, send me some news. and keep your rowing for the envoy's bag.

But where is our hero? Is he forgotten? Never! But in the dumps, blue devils, and so on. A little bilious, it may be, and dull. He scarcely would amuse you at this moment. So I come forward with a graceful bow — the Jack Pudding of our doctor, who is behind.

In short, that is to say, in long,—for what is the use of this affected brevity? When this tale is done, what have you got? So let us make it last. I quite repent of having intimated so much: in future, it is my intention to develope more, and to describe, and to delineate, and to define, and, in short,—to bore. You know the model of this kind of writing—Richardson, whom I shall revive. In future, I shall, as a novelist, take Clarendon's rebellion for my guide, and write my hero's notes, or heroine's letters, like a state paper, or a broken treaty.

The Duke, and the young Duke—oh! to be a Duke, and to be young—it is too much—was

seldom seen by the gay crowd who feasted in his hall. His mornings now were lonely, and if, at night, his eye still sparkled, and his step still sprang, why, between us, wine gave him beauty, and wine gave him grace.

It was the dreary end of dull November, and the last company were breaking off. The Bird of Paradise, according to her desire, had gone to Brighton, where his Grace had presented her with a tenement, neat, light, and finished; and though situated amid the wilds of Kemp Town, not more than one hyæna on a night ventured to come down from the adjacent mountains. He had half promised to join her, because he thought he might as well be there as here, and consequently he had not invited a fresh supply of visitors from town, or rather from the country. As he was hesitating about what he should do, he received a letter from his bankers, which made him stare. He sent for the groom of the chambers, and was informed the house was clear, save that

some single men still lingered, as is their wont. They never take a hint. His Grace ordered his carriage; and, more alive than he had been for the last two months, dashed off to town.

CHAPTER VI.

THE letter from his bankers informed the Duke of St. James that not only was the half million exhausted, but, in pursuance of their powers, they had sold out all his stock, and, in reliance on his credit, had advanced even beyond it. They were ready to accommodate him in every possible way, and to advance as much more as he could desire——at five per cent. Sweet five per cent.! Oh! magical five per cent.! Lucky the rogue now, who gets three. Nevertheless, they thought it but proper to call his Grace's attention to the circumstance, and to put him in possession of the facts I always know something unpleasant

is coming, when men are anxious to tell the truth.

The Duke of St. James had never affected to be a man of business; still he had taken it for granted, that pecuniary embarrassment was not ever to be counted among his annoyances. He wanted something to do, and determined to look into his affairs, merely to amuse himself.

The bankers were most polite. They brought their books, also several packets of papers most neatly tied up, and were ready to give every information. The Duke asked for results. He found that the turf, the Alhambra, the expenses of his outfit in purchasing the lease and furniture of his mansion, liveries, carriages, and the rest, had, with his expenditure, exhausted his first year's income; but he reconciled himself to this, because he chose to consider them extraordinary expenses. Then the festivities of Pen Bronnock counterbalanced the economy of his more scrambling life the preceding year; yet he had not exceeded his income—much.

Then he came to Sir Carte's account. He began to get a little frightened. Two hundred and fifty thousand had been swallowed by Hauteville Castle: one hundred and twenty thousand by Hauteville House. Ninety-six thousand had been paid for furniture. There were also some awkward miscellanies which, in addtion, exceeded the half million.

This was smashing work; but castles and palaces, particularly of the correctest style of architecture, are not to be had for nothing. The Duke had always devoted the half million to this object; but he had intended that sum to be sufficient. What puzzled and what annoyed him was a queer suspicion, that his resources had been exhausted without his result being obtained. He sent for Sir Carte, who gave every information, and assured him, that had he had the least idea that a limit was an object, he would have made his arrangements accordingly. As it was, he assured the young Duke, that he would be the Lord of the most

sumptuous and accurate castle, and of the most gorgeous and tasteful palace in Europe. He was proceeding with a cloud of words, when his employer cut him short, by a peremptory demand of the exact sum requisite for the completion of his plans. Sir Carte was confused, and requested time. The estimates should be sent in as quickly as possible. The clerks should sit up all night, and even his own rest should not be an object, any more than the Duke's purse. So they parted.

The Duke determined to run down to Brighton for change of scene. He promised his bankers to examine every thing on his return; in the mean time, they were to make all necessary advances, and honour his drafts to any amount.

He found the city of chalk and shingles not quite so agreeable as last year. He discovered that it had no trees. There was there, also, just every body that he did not wish to see. It was one great St. James's Street, and seemed

only an anticipation of that very season which he dreaded. He was half inclined to go somewhere else, but could not fix upon any spot. London might be agreeable, as it was empty — but then those confounded accounts awaited him. The Bird of Paradise was a sad bore. He really began to suspect that she was little better than an idiot: then, she ate so much,— and he hated your eating women. He gladly shuffled her off on that fool Count Frill, who daily brought his guitar to Kemp Town. They just suited each other. What a madman he had been, to have embarrassed himself with this creature! It would cost him a pretty ransom now, before he could obtain his freedom. How we change! Already the Duke of St. James began to think of pounds, shillings, and pence. A year ago, as long as he could extricate himself from a scrape, by force of cash, he thought himself a lucky fellow.

The Graftons had not arrived, but were daily expected. He really could not stand them.

As for Lady Afy, he execrated the greenhornism which had made him feign a passion, and then get caught where he meant to capture! As for Sir Lucius, he wished to Heaven he would just take it into his head to repay him the fifteen thousand he had lent him at that confounded election, — to say nothing of any thing else.

Then, there was Burlington, with his old loves and his new dances. He wondered how the deuce that fellow could be amused with such frivolity, and always look so serene and calm. Then, there was Squib: that man never knew when to leave off joking; and Annesley with his false refinement; and Darrell, with his petty ambition. He felt quite sick, and took a solitary ride: but he flew from Scylla to Charybdis. Mrs. Montfort could not forget their many delightful canters last season to Rottindean—and, lo! she was at his side:—he wished her down the cliff.

In this fit of the spleen, he went to the Theatre: there were eleven people in the boxes.

He listened to "The School for Scandal." Never was slander more harmless. He sat it all out, and was sorry when it was over, but was consoled by the devils of Der Freischutz. How sincerely, how ardently did he long to sell himself to the demon! It was eleven o'clock, and he dreaded the play to be over, as if he were a child. What to do with himself, or where to go, he was equally at a loss. The door of the box opened, and entered Lord Bagshot. If it must be an acquaintance, this cub was better than any of his refined and lately cherished companions.

"Well, Bag, what are you doing with yourself?"

"Oh! I don't know: just looking in for a lark Any game?"

"On my honour, I can't say."

"What's that girl? Oh! I see; that's little Wilkins. There's Moll Otway. Nothing new. I shall go and rattle the bones a little—eh! my boy?"

"Rattle the bones! what is that?"

"Don't you know?" and here this promising young peer manually explained his meaning.

"What do you play at?" asked the Duke.

"Hazard, for my money; but what you like."

"Where?"

"We meet at De Berghem's. There is a jolly set of us. All crack men. When my governor is here, I never go. He is so jealous. I suppose there must be only one gamester in the family, eh!—my covey!" Lord Bagshot, excited by the unusual affability of the young Duke, grew quite familiar.

"I have half a mind to look in with you," said his Grace, with a careless air.

"Oh! come along, by all means. They'll be devilish glad to see you. De Berghem was saying, the other day, what a nice fellow you were, and how he should like to know you. You don't know De Berghem, do you?"

"I have seen him. I know enough of him."

The two young noblemen quitted the The-

atre together, and, under the guidance of Lord Bagshot, stopped at a door in Brunswick Terrace. There they found collected a numerous party, but all persons of consideration. The Baron, who had once been a member of the diplomatic corps, and now lived in England, by choice, on his pension and private fortune, received them with the most marked courtesy. Proud of his companion, Lord Bagshot's hoarse, coarse, idiot voice seemed ever braying. His frequent introductions of the Duke of St. James were excruciating, and it required all the freezing of a finished manner to pass through this fiery ordeal. His Grace was acquainted with most of the guests by sight, and to some he even bowed. They were chiefly men of a certain age, with the exception of two or three young peers like himself.

There was the Earl of Castlefort, plump and luxurious, with a youthful wig, who, though a sexagenarian, liked no companion better than a mirror. His Lordship was the most amiable

man in the world, and the most lucky; but his first was his merit, and the second was not his fault. There was the juvenile Lord Dice, who boasted of having done his brothers out of their miserable 5000*l.* patrimony, and all in one night. But the wrinkle that had already ruffled his once clear brow, his sunken eye, and his convulsive lip, had been thrown, I suppose, into the bargain, and, in my opinion, made it a dear one. There was Temple Grace, who had run through four fortunes, and ruined four sisters. Withered, though only thirty, one thing alone remained to be lost—what he called his honour, which was already on the scent to play booty. There was Cogit, who, when he was drunk, swore that he had had a father; but this was deemed the only exception to *in vino veritas.* Who he was, the Goddess of Chance could alone decide; and I have often thought that he might bear the same relation to her, as Æneas to the Goddess of Beauty. His age was as great a mystery as any thing else. He dressed still like

a boy,—yet some vowed he was eighty. He must have been Salathiel. Property he never had,—and yet he contrived to live; connexion he was not born with,—yet he was upheld by a set. He never played,—yet he was the most skilful dealer going. He did the honours of a *Rouge et Noir* table to a miracle; and looking, as he thought, most genteel in a crimson waistcoat and a gold chain, raked up the spoils, or complacently announced *aprés*. Lord Castlefort had few secrets from him: he was the jackal to these prowling beasts of prey; looked out for pigeons,—got up little parties to Richmond or Brighton,—sang a song, when the rest were too anxious to make a noise, and yet desired a little life, and perhaps could cog a die, arrange a looking-glass, or mix a tumbler.

Unless the loss of an occasional Napoleon at a German watering-place is to be so stigmatised, gaming had never formed one of the numerous follies of the Duke of St. James. Rich, and gifted with a generous, sanguine, and luxurious

disposition, he had never been tempted by the desire of gain, or, as some may perhaps maintain, by the desire of excitement, to seek assistance or enjoyment in a mode of life which stultifies all our fine fancies, deadens all our noble emotions, and mortifies all our beautiful aspirations.

I know that I am broaching a doctrine which many will start at, and which some will protest against, when I declare my belief, that no person, whatever be his rank, or apparent wealth, ever yet gamed, except from the prospect of immediate gain. We hear much of want of excitement, of *ennui*, of satiety; and then the gaming-table is announced as a sort of substitute for opium, wine, or any other mode of obtaining a more intense vitality at the cost of reason. Gaming is too active, too anxious, too complicated, too troublesome,—in a word, *too sensible* an affair for such spirits, who fly only to a sort of dreamy and indefinite distraction. The fact is, gaming is a matter of busi-

ness. Its object is tangible, clear, and evident. There is nothing high, or inflammatory, or exciting; no false magnificence, no visionary elevation, in the affair at all. It is the very antipodes to enthusiasm of any kind. It presupposes in its votary a mind essentially mercantile. All the feelings that are in its train, are the most mean, the most commonplace, and the most annoying of daily life, and nothing would tempt the gamester to experience them, except the great object which, as a matter of calculation, he is willing to aim at on such terms. No man flies to the gaming-table in a paroxysm. The first visit requires the courage of a forlorn hope. The first stake will make the lightest mind anxious, the firmest hand tremble, and the stoutest heart falter. After the first stake, it is all a matter of calculation and management, even in games of chance. Night after night will men play at *Rouge et Noir*, upon what they call a system; and for hours their attention never ceases, any more

than it would if they were in the shop, or on the wharf. No manual labour is more fatiguing, and more degrading to the labourer, than gaming. Every gamester (I speak not of the irreclaimable) feels ashamed. And this vice, this worst vice, from whose embrace, moralists daily inform us, man can never escape, is just the one from which the majority of men most completely, and most often, emancipate themselves. Infinite are the men who have lost thousands in their youth, and never dream of chance again. It is this pursuit which, oftener than any other, leads man to self-knowledge. Appalled by the absolute destruction on the verge of which he finds his early youth just stepping; aghast at the shadowy crimes which, under the influence of this life, seem, as it were, to rise upon his soul, often he hurries to emancipate himself from this fatal thraldom, and with a ruined fortune, and marred prospects, yet thanks his Creator that his soul is still white, his conscience clear, and that, once more, he breathes the sweet air of heaven.

And our young Duke, I must confess, gamed, as all other men have gamed—for money. His satiety had fled the moment that his affairs were embarrassed. The thought suddenly came into his head, while Bagshot was speaking. He determined to make an effort to recover: and so completely was it a matter of business with him, that he reasoned, that in the present state of his affairs, a few thousands more would not signify,—that these few thousands might lead to vast results, and that, if they did, he would bid adieu to the gaming-table with the same coolness with which he had saluted it.

Yet he felt a little odd, when he first rattled the bones; and his affected *nonchalance* made him constrained. He fancied every one was watching him; while, on the contrary, all were too much interested in their own different parties. This feeling, however, wore off.

According to every novelist, and the moralists "our betters," the Duke of St. James should have been fortunate at least to-night.

You always win, at first, you know. If so, I advise said children of fancy and of fact to pocket their gains, and not play again. The young Duke had not the opportunity of thus acting. He lost fifteen hundred pounds, and at half-past five he quitted the Baron's.

Hot, bilious, with a confounded twang in his mouth, and a cracking pain in his head, he stood one moment and sniffed in the salt sea breeze. The moon was unfortunately on the waters, and her cool, beneficent light reminded him, with disgust, of the hot, burning glare of the Baron's saloon. He thought of May Dacre, but clenched his fist, and drove her image from his mind.

CHAPTER VII.

He rose late, and as he was lounging over his breakfast, entered Lord Bagshot and the Baron. Already the young Duke began to experience one of the gamester's curses, — the intrusive society of those of whom you are ashamed. Eight-and-forty hours ago, Lord Bagshot would no more have dared to call upon the Duke of St. James, than to call at the Pavilion; and now, with that reckless want of tact which marks the innately vulgar, he seemed to triumph in their unhallowed intimacy, and lounging into his Grace's apartment with that half-shuffling, half-swaggering air indicative of the "cove," hat cocked, and

thumbs in his great-coat pockets, cast his complacent eye around, and praised his Grace's "rooms." Lord Bagshot, who for the occasional notice of the Duke of St. James, had been so long a ready and patient butt, now appeared to assume a higher character, and addressed his friend in a tone and manner which were authorized by the equality of their rank, and the sympathy of their tastes. If this change had taken place in the conduct of the Viscount, it was not a singular one. The Duke also, to his surprise, found himself addressing his former butt in a very different style to that which he had assumed in the ball-room of Doncaster. In vain, he tried to rally, — in vain, he tried to snub. It was indeed in vain. He no longer possessed any right to express his contempt of his companion. That contempt, indeed, he still felt. He despised Lord Bagshot still, but he also despised himself.

The soft and silly Baron was a very different sort of personage; but there was something

sinister in all his elaborate courtesy and highly artificial manner, which did not touch the feelings of the Duke, whose courtesy was but the expression of his noble feelings, and whose grace was only the impulse of his rich and costly blood. Baron de Berghem was too attentive, and too deferential. He smiled and bowed too much. He made no allusion to the last night's scene, nor did his tutored companion, but spoke of very different and lighter subjects, in a manner which at once proved his experience of society, the liveliness of his talents, and the cultivation of his taste. He told many stories, all very short and poignant, and always about princes or princesses. Whatever was broached, he always had his *apropos* of Vienna, and altogether seemed an experienced, mild, tolerant man of the world, not bigoted to any particular opinions upon any subject, but of a truly liberal and philosophic mind.

When they had sat chattering for half an hour, the Baron developed the object of his

visit, which was to endeavour to obtain the pleasure of his Grace's company at dinner; to taste some wild boar, and try some tokay. The Duke, who longed again for action, accepted the invitation; and then they parted.

Our hero was quite surprised at the feverish anxiety with which he awaited the hour of union. He thought that seven o'clock would never come. He had no appetite at breakfast, and after that he rode, but luncheon was a blank. In the midst of the operation, he found himself in a brown study, calculating chances. All day long, his imagination had been playing Hazard, or *Rouge et Noir*. Once, he thought that he had discovered an infallible way of winning at the latter. On the long run, he was convinced it must answer, and he panted to prove it.

Seven o'clock at last arrived, and he departed to Brunswick Terrace. There was a brilliant party to meet him: the same set as last night, but select. He was faint, and did justice to

the *cuisine* of his host, which was indeed remarkable. When we are drinking a man's good wine, it is difficult to dislike him. Prejudice decreases with every draught. His Grace began to think the Baron as good-hearted as agreeable. He was grateful for the continued attentions of old Castlefort, who, he now found out, had been very well acquainted with his father, and once even made a trip to Spa with him. Lord Dice he could not manage to endure, though that worthy was, for him, remarkably courteous, and grinned with his parchment face, like a good-humoured Ghoul. Temple Grace and the Duke became almost intimate. There was an amiable candour in that gentleman's address, a softness in his tones, and an unstudied and extremely interesting delicacy in his manner, which in this society was remarkable. Tom Cogit never presumed to come near the young Duke, but paid him constant attention. He sat at the bottom of the table, and was ever sending a

servant with some choice wine, or recommending him, through some third person, some choice dish. It is pleasant to be "made much of," as Shakspeare says, even by scoundrels. To be king of your company, is a poor ambition,—yet homage is homage, and smoke is smoke—whether it come out of the chimney of a palace, or of a workhouse.

The banquet was not hurried. Though all wished it finished, no one liked to appear urgent. It was over at last, and they walked up-stairs, where the tables were arranged for all parties, and all play. Tom Cogit went up a few minutes before them, like the lady of the mansion, to review the lights, and arrange the cards. Feminine Tom Cogit!

The events of to-night were much the same as of the preceding one. The Duke was a loser, but his losses were not considerable. He retired about the same hour, with a head not so hot, or heavy; and he never looked at the moon, or thought of May Dacre. The only

wish that reigned in his soul, was a longing for another opportunity, and he had agreed to dine with the Baron, before he left Brunswick Terrace.

Thus passed a week — one night the Duke of St. James redeeming himself; another falling back to his old position, now pushing on to Madrid, now re-crossing the Tagus. On the whole, he had lost four or five thousand pounds, a mere trifle to what, as he had heard, had been lost and gained by many of his companions during only the present season. On the whole, he was one of the most moderate of these speculators, generally played at the large table, and never joined any of those private coteries, some of which he had observed, and of some of which he had heard. Yet this was from no prudential resolve or temperate resolution. The young Duke was heartily tired of the slight results of all his anxiety, hopes, and plans, and ardently wished for some opportunity of coming to closer and more decided

action. The Baron also had resolved, that an end should be put to this skirmishing, —but he was a calm head, and never hurried any thing.

"I hope your Grace has been lucky to-night?" said the Baron one evening, strolling up to the Duke: "as for myself, really, if Dice goes on playing, I shall give up banking. That fellow must have a talisman. I think he has broken more banks than any man living. The best thing he did of that kind was the Roulette story at Paris. You have heard of that?"

"Was that Lord Dice!"

"Oh! yes, he does every thing. He must have cleared his hundred thousand last year. I have suffered a good deal since I have been in England. Castlefort has pulled in a great deal of my money. I wonder to whom he will leave his property?"

"You think him rich?"

"Oh! he will cut up very large!" said the Baron, elevating his eyebrows. "A pleasant

man too! I do not know any man that I would sooner play with than Castlefort — no one who loses his money with better temper."

"Or wins it," said his Grace.

"That we all do," said the Baron, faintly laughing. "Your Grace has lost, and you do not seem particularly dull. You will have your revenge. Those who lose at first are always the children of fortune. I always dread a man who loses at first. All I beg is, that you will not break my bank."

"Why! you see I am not playing now."

"I am not surprised. There is too much heat and noise here," said he. "We will have a quiet dinner some day, and play at our ease. Come to-morrow, and I will ask Castlefort and Dice. I should uncommonly like, *entre nous*, to win some of their money. I will take care that nobody shall be here whom you would not like to meet. By the by, whom were you riding with this morning? Fine woman!"

CHAPTER VIII.

The young Duke had accepted the invitation of the Baron de Berghem for to-morrow, and accordingly, himself, Lords Castlefort and Dice, and Temple Grace, assembled in Brunswick Terrace at the usual hour. The dinner was studiously plain, and very little wine was drunk; yet every thing was perfect. Tom Cogit stepped in to carve, in his usual silent manner. He always came in and went out of a room without any one observing him. He winked familiarly to Temple Grace, but scarcely presumed to bow to the Duke. He was very busy about the wine, and dressed the wild fowl in a manner quite unparalleled. Tom Cogit was

the man for a sauce for a brown bird. What a mystery he made of it! Cayenne, and Burgundy, and limes were ingredients, but there was a magic in the incantation, with which he alone was acquainted. He took particular care to send a most perfect portion to the young Duke, and he did this, as he paid all attentions to influential strangers, with the most marked consciousness of the sufferance which permitted his presence: never addressing his Grace, but audibly whispering to the servant, "Take this to the Duke;" or asking the attendant, "whether his Grace would try the Hermitage?"

After dinner, with the exception of Cogit, who was busied in compounding some wonderful liquid for the future refreshment, they sat down to *Ecarté*. Without having exchanged a word upon the subject, there seemed a general understanding among all the parties, that to-night was to be a pitched battle, and they began at once, very briskly. Yet, in spite of their universal determination, midnight arrived with

out any thing very decisive. Another hour passed over, and then Tom Cogit kept touching the Baron's elbow, and whispering in a voice which everybody could understand. All this meant that supper was ready. It was brought into the room.

Gaming has one advantage—it gives you an appetite; that is to say, as long as you have a chance remaining. The Duke had thousands,—for at present, his resources were unimpaired, and he was exhausted by the constant attention and anxiety of five hours. He passed over the delicacies, and went to the side-table, and began cutting himself some cold roast beef. Tom Cogit ran up, not to his Grace, but to the Baron, to announce the shocking fact, that the Duke of St. James was enduring great trouble; and then the Baron asked his Grace to permit Mr. Cogit to serve him. Our hero devoured—I use the word advisedly, as fools say in the House of Commons—he devoured the roast beef, and rejecting the hermitage with disgust, asked for porter.

They sat to again, fresh as eagles. At six o'clock, accounts were so complicated, that they stopped to make up their books. Each played with his memorandums and pencil at his side. Nothing fatal had yet happened. The Duke owed Lord Dice about five thousand pounds, and Temple Grace owed him, as many hundreds. Lord Castlefort also was his debtor, to the tune of seven hundred and fifty, and the Baron was in his books, but slightly. Every half hour they had a new pack of cards, and threw the used one on the floor. All this time, Tom Cogit did nothing but snuff the candles, stir the fire, bring them a new pack, and occasionally make a tumbler for them.

At eight o'clock, the Duke's situation was worsened. The run was greatly against him, and perhaps his losses were doubled. He pulled up again the next hour or two; but nevertheless, at ten o'clock, owed every one something. No one offered to give over; and every one, perhaps, felt that his object was not obtained. They made their toilettes, and went

down-stairs to breakfast. In the mean time, the shutters were opened, the room aired; and in less than an hour, they were at it again.

They played till dinner-time without intermission; and though the Duke made some desperate efforts, and some successful ones, his losses were, nevertheless, trebled. Yet he ate an excellent dinner, and was not at all depressed; because the more he lost, the more his courage and his resources seemed to expand. At first, he had limited himself to ten thousand; after breakfast, it was to have been twenty thousand; then, thirty thousand was the ultimatum; and now he dismissed all thoughts of limits from his mind, and was determined to risk or gain every thing.

At midnight, he had lost forty-eight thousand pounds. Affairs now began to be serious. His supper was not so hearty. While the rest were eating, he walked about the room, and began to limit his ambition to recovery, and not to gain. When you play to win back, the fun is

over: there is nothing to recompense you for your bodily tortures and your degraded feelings; and the very best result that can happen, while it has no charms, seems to your cowed mind impossible.

On they played, and the Duke lost more. His mind was jaded. He floundered,—he made desperate efforts, but plunged deeper in the slough. Feeling that, to regain his ground, each card must tell, he acted on each as if it must win, and the consequences of this insanity (for a gamester, at such a crisis, is really insane,) were, that his losses were prodigious.

Another morning came, and there they sat, ankle deep in cards. No attempt at breakfast now — no affectation of making a toilette, or airing the room. The atmosphere was hot, to be sure, but it well became such a Hell. There they sat, in total, in positive forgetfulness of every thing but the hot game they were hunting down. There was not a man in the room, except Tom Cogit, who could have told you

the name of the town in which they were living. There they sat, almost breathless, watching every turn with the fell look in their cannibal eyes, which showed their total inability to sympathize with their fellow-beings. All forms of society had been long forgotten. There was no snuff-box handed about now, for courtesy, admiration, or a pinch; no affectation of occasionally making a remark upon any other topic but the all-engrossing one. Lord Castlefort rested with his arms on the table:—a false tooth had got unhinged. His Lordship, who, at any other time, would have been most annoyed, coolly put it in his pocket. His cheeks had fallen, and he looked twenty years older. Lord Dice had torn off his cravat, and his hair hung down over his callous, bloodless cheeks, straight as silk. Temple Grace looked as if he were blighted by lightning; and his deep blue eyes gleamed like a hyæna. The Baron was least changed. Tom Cogit, who smelt that the crisis was at hand, was as quiet as a bribed rat.

On they played till six o'clock in the evening, and then they agreed to desist till after dinner. Lord Dice threw himself on a sofa. Lord Castlefort breathed with difficulty. The rest walked about. While they were resting on their oars, the young Duke roughly made up his accounts. He found that he was minus about one hundred thousand pounds.

Immense as this loss was, he was more struck,—more appalled, let me say,—at the strangeness of the surrounding scene, than even by his own ruin. As he looked upon his fellow gamesters, he seemed, for the first time in his life, to gaze upon some of those hideous demons of whom he had read. He looked in the mirror at himself. A blight seemed to have fallen over his beauty, and his presence seemed accursed. He had pursued a dissipated, even more than a dissipated career. Many were the nights that had been spent by him not on his couch great had been the exhaustion that he had often experienced; haggard had sometimes even been the

lustre of his youth. But when had been marked upon his brow this harrowing care? when had his features before been stamped with this anxiety, this anguish, this baffled desire, this strange unearthly scowl, which made him even tremble? What! was it possible?——it could not be——that in time he was to be like those awful, those unearthly, those unhallowed things that were around him. He felt as if he had fallen from his state,—as if he had dishonoured his ancestry,—as if he had betrayed his trust. He felt a criminal. In the darkness of his meditations, a flash burst from his lurid mind,— a celestial light appeared to dissipate this thickening gloom, and his soul felt as it were bathed with the softening radiancy. He thought of May Dacre, he thought of everything that was pure, and holy, and beautiful, and luminous, and calm. It was the innate virtue of the man that made this appeal to his corrupted nature. His losses seemed nothing; his dukedom would be too slight a ransom for freedom

from these ghouls, and for the breath of the sweet air.

He advanced to the Baron, and expressed his desire to play no more. There was an immediate stir. All jumped up, and now the deed was done. Cant, in spite of their exhaustion, assumed her reign. They begged him to have his revenge,—were quite annoyed at the result,—had no doubt he would recover if he proceeded. Without noticing their remarks, he seated himself at the table, and wrote cheques for their respective amounts, Tom Cogit jumping up and bringing him the inkstand. Lord Castlefort, in the most affectionate manner, pocketed the draft; at the same time recommending the Duke not to be in a hurry, but to send it when he was cool. Lord Dice received his with a bow,—Temple Grace, with a sigh,—the Baron, with an avowal of his readiness always to give him his revenge.

The Duke, though sick at heart, would not leave the room with any evidence of a broken

spirit; and when Lord Castlefort again repeated, "Pay us when we meet again," he said: "I think it very improbable that we shall meet again, my Lord. I wished to know what gaming was. I had heard a great deal about it. It is not so very disgusting; but I am a young man, and cannot play tricks with my complexion."

He reached his house. The Bird was out. He gave orders for himself not to be disturbed, and he went to bed; but in vain he tried to sleep. What rack exceeds the torture of an excited brain, and an exhausted body? His hands and feet were like ice, his brow like fire; his ears rung with supernatural roaring; a nausea had seized upon him, and death he would have welcomed. In vain, in vain he courted repose; in vain, in vain he had recourse to every expedient, to wile himself to slumber. Each minute he started from his pillow with some phrase which reminded him of his late fearful society. Hour after hour moved on

with its leaden pace; each hour he heard strike, and each hour seemed an age. Each hour was only a signal to cast off some covering, or shift his position. It was, at length, morning. With a feeling that he should go mad if he remained any longer in bed, he rose, and paced his chamber. The air refreshed him. He threw himself on the floor; the cold crept over his senses, and he slept.

CHAPTER IX.

Oh! ye immortal Gods!—ye are still immortal, although no longer ye hover o'er Olympus. The Crescent glitters on your mountain's base, and Crosses spring from out its toppling crags. But in vain the Mufti, and the Patriarch, and the Pope, flout at your past traditions. They are married to man's memory by the sweetest chain that ever Fancy wove for Love. The poet is a priest, who does not doubt the inspiration of his oracles; and your shrines are still served by a faithful band, who love the beautiful, and adore the glorious! In vain, in vain, they tell us your divinity is a dream. From the cradle to the grave, our thoughts and feel-

ings take their colour from you. Oh! Ægiochus, the birch has often proved thou art still a thunderer; and, although thy twanging bow murmur no longer through the avenging air, many an apple twig still indicates thy outraged dignity, pulcher Apollo!

Oh! ye immortal Gods! nothing so difficult as to begin a chapter, and therefore have I flown to you. In literature, as in life, it is the first step—you know the rest. After a paragraph or so, our blood is up, and even my jaded hackneys scud along, and warm up into friskness.

The Duke awoke: another day of his eventful life is now to run its course. He found that the Bird of Paradise had not returned from an excursion to a neighbouring Park: he left a note for her, apprising her of his departure to London, and he despatched a very affectionate letter to Lady Aphrodite, which was the least that he could do, considering that he perhaps quitted Brighton the day of her arrival. And

having done all this, he ordered his horses, and before noon was on his first stage.

It was his birthday. He had completed his twenty-third year. This was sufficient, even if he had no other inducement, to make him indulge in some slight reflection. These annual summings up are awkward things, even to the prosperous and the happy, but to those who are the reverse, who are discontented with themselves, and find that youth melting away, which they believe can alone achieve any thing, I think a birthday is about the most gloomy four-and-twenty hours that ever flap their damp, dull wings over melancholy man.

Yet the Duke of St. James was rather thoughtful than melancholy. His life had been too active of late to allow him to indulge much in that passive mood. "I may never know what happiness is," thought his Grace as he leaned back in his whirling britscha, "but I think I know what happiness is not. It is not the career which I have hitherto pursued. All

this excitement which they talk of so much, wears out the mind, and, I begin to believe, even the body; for certainly my energies seem deserting me. But two years, two miserable years, four-and-twenty months, eight-and-forty times the hours, the few hours, that I have been worse than wasting here, and I am shipwrecked — fairly bulged. Yet I have done every thing, tried every thing, and my career has been an eminent career. Woe to the wretch who trusts to his pampered senses for felicity! Woe to the wretch who flies from the bright goddess Sympathy, to sacrifice before the dark idol Self-love! Ah! I see too late, we were made for each other. Too late I discover the beautiful results of this great principle of creation. Oh! the blunders of an unformed character! Oh! the torture of an ill-regulated mind!

"Give me a life with no fierce alternations of rapture and anguish,—no impossible hopes,—no mad depression. Free me from the delusions

which succeed each other like scentless roses, that are ever blooming. Save me from the excitement which brings exhaustion, and from the passion that procreates remorse. Give me the luminous mind, where recognised and paramount duty dispels the harassing, ascertains the doubtful, confirms the wavering, sweetens the bitter. Give me content! Oh! give me love!

"How is it to end? What is to become of me? Can nothing rescue me? Is there no mode of relief, no place of succour, no quarter of refuge, no hope of salvation? I cannot right myself, and there is an end of it. Society, society, society! I owe thee much; and perhaps in working in thy service, those feelings might be developed which I am now convinced are the only source of happiness—but I am plunged too deep in the quag. I have no impulse, no call. I know not how it is, but my energies, good and evil, seem alike vanishing. There stares that fellow at my carriage!

God! willingly would I break the stones upon the road for a year, to clear my mind of all the past!"

A carriage dashed by, and a lady bowed. It was Mrs. Dallington Vere.

The Duke had appointed his banker to dine with him, as not a moment must be lost in preparing for the reception of his Brighton drafts. He was also to receive, this evening, a complete report of all his affairs. The first thing that struck his eye on his table was a packet from Sir Carte Blanche. He opened it eagerly, stared, started, nearly shrieked. It fell from his hands. He was fortunately alone. The estimates for the completion of his works, and the purchase of the rest of the furniture, exactly equalled the sum already expended. Sir Carte added, that the works might of course be stopped, but that there was no possible way of reducing them, with any deference to the original design, scale, and style; that he had already given instructions not to proceed with

the furniture until further notice, but regretted to observe, that the orders were so advanced that he feared it was too late to make any sensible reduction. It might, in some degree, reconcile his Grace to this report, when he concluded by observing, that the advanced state of the works could permit him to guarantee that the present estimates would not be exceeded.

The Duke had sufficiently recovered before the arrival of his confidential agent not to appear agitated, only serious. The awful catastrophe at Brighton was announced, and his report of affairs was received. It was a very gloomy one. Great agricultural distress prevailed, and the rents could not be got in. Five and twenty per cent. was the least that must be taken off his income, and with no prospect of being speedily added on. There was a projected rail-road which would entirely knock up his canal, and even if crushed must be expensively opposed. Coals were falling also, and the duties in town increasing. There was sad

confusion in the Irish estates. The missionaries, who were patronised on the neighbouring lands of one of the City Companies, had been exciting fatal confusion. Chapels were burnt, crops destroyed, stock butchered, and rents all in arrear. Mr. Dacre had contrived with great prudence to repress the efforts of the new reformation, and had succeeded in preventing any great mischief. His plans for the pursual of his ideas and feelings upon this subject had been communicated to his late ward in an urgent and important paper, which his Grace had never seen, but one day, unread, pushed into a certain black cabinet, which perhaps the reader may remember. His Grace's miscellaneous debts had also been called in, and amounted to a greater sum than they had anticipated, which debts always do. One hundred and forty thousand pounds had crumbled away in the most imperceptible manner. A very great slice of this was the portion of the jeweller. His shield and his vases would at least be evidence to his

posterity, of the splendour and the taste of their imprudent ancestor; but he observed the other items with less satisfaction. He discovered, that in the course of two years he had given away one hundred and thirty-seven necklaces and chains; and as for rings, they must be counted by the bushel. The result of this gloomy interview was, that the Duke had not only managed to get rid of the immortal half million, but had incurred debts or engagements to the amount of nearly eight hundred thousand pounds, incumbrances which were to be borne by a decreased, and perhaps decreasing income.

His Grace was once more alone.

"Well! my brain is not turned; — and yet, I think, it has been pretty well worked these last few days. It cannot be true: — it must all be a dream. He never could have dined here, and said all this. Have I, indeed, been at Brighton? No, no, no, — I have been sleeping after dinner. I have a good mind to ring and

ask whether he really was here. It must be one great delusion. But no!—there are those cursed accounts. Well! what does it signify? I was miserable before, and now I am only contemptible in addition. How the world will laugh! They were made forsooth for my diversion. Oh, idiot! you will be the butt of every one! Talk of Bagshot, indeed!—Why, he will scarcely speak to me!

"Away with this! Let me turn these things in my mind. Take it at one hundred and fifty thousand. It is more,—it must be more: but we will take it at that. Now, suppose one hundred thousand is allotted every year to meet my debts; I suppose, in nine or ten years I shall be free. Not that freedom will be worth much then; but still I am thinking of the glory of the House I have betrayed. Well, then, there is fifty thousand a-year left. Let me see: twenty thousand have always been spent in Ireland, and ten at Pen Bronnock—and they must not be cut down. The only thing I can

do now is, not to spare myself. I am the cause, and let me meet the consequences. Well, then, perhaps twenty thousand a-year remain to keep Hauteville Castle and Hauteville House; to maintain the splendour of the Duke of St. James. Why, my hereditary charities alone amount to a quarter of my income, to say nothing of incidental charges: — I too, who should and who would wish to rebuild, at my own cost, every bridge that is swept away, and every steeple that is burnt in my county.

"And now for the great point. Shall I proceed with my buildings? My own personal convenience whispers — no! But I have a strong conviction that the advice is treasonable. What! the young Duke's folly, for every gazer in town and country to sneer at! Oh! my fathers, am I indeed your child, or am I bastard? Never—never shall your shield be sullied while I bear it! Never shall your proud banner veil while I am chieftain! They shall be finished — certainly, they shall be finished, if I die an

exile! There can be no doubt about this: I feel the deep propriety.

"This girl, too — something must be done for her. I must get Squib to run down to Brighton for me: and Afy, — poor, dear Afy, — I think she will be sorry when she hears it all!

"My head is weak: I want a counsellor. This man cannot enter into my feelings. Then, there is my family lawyer. If I ask him for advice, he will ask me for instructions. Besides, this is not a matter of pounds, shillings, and pence; it is an affair as much of sentiment as economy; it involves the honour of my family—and I want one to unburthen myself to, who can sympathize with the tortured feelings of a Noble — of a Duke without a dukedom — for it has come to that. But I will leave sneers to the world.

"There is Annesley. He is clever, but so cold-blooded. He has no heart. There is Squib. He is a good fellow, and has heart

enough; and I suppose, if I wanted to pension off a mistress, or compound with a few rascally tradesmen, he would manage the affair to a miracle. There is Darrell; but he will be so fussy, and confidential, and official. Every meeting will be a privy council, every discussion a debate, every memorandum a state paper. There is Burlington: he is experienced, and clever, and kind-hearted, and, I really think, likes me;—but—no, no, it is too ridiculous. We who have only met for enjoyment, whose countenance was a smile, and whose conversation was badinage; we to meet, and meditate on my broken fortunes! Impossible! Besides what right have I to compel a man, the study of whose life is to banish care, to take all my anxieties on his back; or refuse the duty at the cost of my acquaintance, and the trouble of his conscience. Ah! I once had a friend, the best, the wisest—but no more of that. What is even the loss of fortune and of consideration to the loss of his——his daughter's love!"

His voice faltered, yet it was long before he retired; and he rose on the morrow only to meditate over his harassing embarrassments. As if the cup of his misery were not o'erflowing, a new incident occurred about this time, which rendered his sense of them even keener. But this is important enough to commence a new chapter.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM HENRY, MARQUESS OF MARYLEBONE, completed his twenty-first year—an event which created a greater sensation among the aristocracy of England, even than the majority of George Augustus Frederick, Duke of St. James. The rent-roll of his Grace was great; but that of his Lordship was incalculable. He had not indeed so many castles as our hero; but then, in the metropolis, a whole parish owned him as lord; and it was whispered, that when a few miles of leases fell in, the very Civil List must give him the wall. Even in the duration of his minority, he had the

superiority over the young Duke, for the Marquess was a posthumous son.

Lord Marylebone was a short, thick, swarthy young gentleman, with wiry black hair, a nose somewhat flat, sharp eyes, and tusky mouth—altogether not very unlike a terrier. His tastes were unknown: he had not travelled, nor done any thing very particular, except with a few congenial spirits, beat the Guards in a rowing-match,—a pretty diversion, and almost as conducive to a small, white hand, as almond paste.

But his Lordship was now of age, and might be seen every day at a certain hour rattling up Bond Street with a long red van, in which he drove four or five particular friends who lived at Stevens' hotel, and therefore, I suppose, were the partners of his glory in his victory over his Majesty's household troops. Lord Marylebone was the universal subject of conversation. Pursuits which would have devoted a shabby Earl of twelve or fifteen thousand a-

year to universal reprobation, or, what is much worse, to universal sneers, assumed quite a different character, when they constituted the course of life of this fortunate youth. He was a delightful young man. So unaffected! No super-refinement, no false delicacy. Every one, every sex, every thing, extended his, her, or its hand to this cub, who, quite puzzled, but too brutal to be confused, kept driving on the red van, and each day perpetrating some new act of profligacy, some new instance of coarse profusion, tasteless extravagance, and inelegant eccentricity.'

But, nevertheless, he was the hero of the town. He was the great point of interest in "The Universe," and "The New World" favoured the old one with weekly articles on his character and conduct. The young Duke was quite forgotten, if really young he could be longer called. Lord Marylebone was in the mouth of every tradesman, who authenticated his own vile inventions by foisting them on his

Lordship. The most grotesque fashions suddenly inundated the metropolis; and when the Duke of St. James ventured to express his disapprobation, he found his empire was over. "They were sorry that it did not meet his Grace's taste; but really what his Grace had suggested was quite gone by. This was the only hat, or cane, or coat, which any civilized being could be seen with. Lord Marylebone wore, or bore, no other."

In higher circles, it was much the same. Although the dandies would not bate an inch, and certainly would not elect the young Marquess for their leader, they found, to their dismay, that the empire which they were meditating to defend, had already slipped away from their grasp. A new race of adventurous youths appeared upon the stage. Beards, and great-coats even rougher, bull-dogs instead of poodles, clubs instead of canes, segars instead of perfumes, were the order of the day. There was no end to boat-racing; Crockford's sneered at White's; and

there was even a talk of reviving the ring. Even the women patronized the young Marquess, and those who could not be blind to his real character, were sure, that, if well managed, he would not turn out ill.

Assuredly, our hero, though shelved, did not envy his successful rival. Had he been, instead of one for whom he felt a sovereign contempt, a being even more accomplished than himself, pity and not envy would have been the sentiment, he would have yielded to his ascendant star. But, nevertheless, he could not be insensible to the results of this incident; and the advent of the young Marquess seemed like the sting in the epigram of his life. After all his ruinous magnificence, after all the profuse indulgence of his fantastic tastes, he had sometimes consoled himself, even in the bitterness of satiety, by reminding himself, that he, at least, commanded the admiration of his fellow-creatures, although it had been purchased at a costly price. Not insensible to the power of

his wealth, the magic of his station, he had, however, ventured to indulge in the sweet belief, that these qualities were less concerned in the triumphs of his career, than his splendid person, his accomplished mind, his amiable disposition, and his finished manner; his beauty, his wit, his goodness, and his grace. Even from this delusion, too, was he to waken, and, for the first time in his life, he gauged the depth and strength of that popularity which had been so dear to him, and which he now found to be so shallow and so weak.

"What will they think of me when they know all! What they will: I care not. I would sooner live in a cottage with May Dacre, and work for our daily bread, than be worshipped by all the beauty of this Babylon."

Gloomy, yet sedate, he returned home. His letters announced two extraordinary events. M. de Whiskerburg had galloped off with Lady Aphrodite, and Count Frill had flown away with the Bird of Paradise.

CHAPTER XI.

THE last piece of information was a relief; but the announcement of the elopement cost him a pang. Both surprised, and the first shocked him. We are unreasonable in love, and do not like to be anticipated even in neglect. An hour ago, Lady Aphrodite Grafton was to him only an object of anxiety and a cause of embarrassment. She was now a being to whom he was indebted for some of the most pleasing hours of his existence, and who could no longer contribute to his felicity. Every body appeared deserting him.

He had neglected her, to be sure; and they must have parted, it was certain. Yet although

the present event saved him from the most harrowing of scenes, he could not refrain shedding a tear. So good!, and so beautiful!——and was this her end? He, who knew all, knew how bitter had been the lot of her life.

It is certain, that when one of your very virtuous women ventures to be a little indiscreet, I say it is certain, though I regret it, that sooner or later there is an explosion. And the reason is this, that they are always in a hurry to make up for lost time, and so love with them becomes a business instead of being a pleasure. Nature had intended Lady Aphrodite Grafton for a Psyche, so spiritual was her soul, so pure her blood! Art, that is, education, which at least should be an art, though it is not,— art had exquisitely sculptured the precious gem that Nature had developed, and all that was wanting was love to stamp an impression. Lady Aphrodite Grafton might have been as perfect a character as was ever the heroine of a novel:—and to whose account shall we place her

blighted fame and sullied lustre? To that animal, who seems formed only to betray woman. Her husband was a traitor in disguise. She found herself betrayed; but like a noble chieftain, when her capital was lost, maintained herself among the ruins of her happiness, in the citadel of her virtue. She surrendered, she thought, on terms, and in yielding her heart to the young Duke, though never for a moment blind to her conduct, yet memory whispered extenuation, and love added——all that was necessary.

Our hero (I am for none of your perfect heroes) did not behave much better than her husband. The difference between them was, Sir Lucius Grafton's character was formed, and formed for evil; while the Duke of St. James, when he became acquainted with Lady Aphrodite, possessed none. Gallantry was a habit, in which he had been brought up. To protest to woman what he did not believe, and to feign what he did not feel, was, as he supposed,

parts in the character of an accomplished gentleman; and as hitherto he had not found his career productive of any misery, we may perhaps view his conduct with less severity. But, at length, he approaches,—not a mere woman of the world, who tries to delude him into the idea, that he is the first hero of a romance that has been a hundred times repeated. He trembles at the responsibility which he has incurred by engaging the feelings of another. In the conflict of his emotions, some rays of moral light break upon his darkened soul. Profligacy brings its own punishment, and he feels keenly that man is the subject of sympathy, and not the slave of self-love.

This remorse protracts a connection, which each day is productive of more painful feelings; but the heart cannot be overstrung, and anxiety ends in callousness. Then, come neglect, remonstrance, explanations, protestations, and, sooner or later, the catastrophe.

But love is a dangerous habit, and when

once indulged, is not easily thrown off, unless you become devout, which is, in a manner, giving the passion a new direction. In Catholic countries, it is surprising how many adventures end in a convent. A dame, in her desperation, flies to the grate, which never re-opens: but in Protestant regions, she has time to cool, and that's the deuce; so, instead of taking the veil, she takes——a new lover.

Lady Aphrodite had worked up her mind, and the young Duke, to a step, the very mention of which, a year before, would have made her shudder. What an enchanter is Passion! No wonder, Ovid, who was a judge, made love so much connected with his Metamorphoses. With infinite difficulty, had she dared to admit the idea of flying with his Grace: but when the idea was once admitted; when she really had, once or twice, constantly dwelt on the idea of at length being free from her tyrant, and perhaps about to indulge in those beautiful affections for which she was formed, and of

which she had been rifled; when, I say, all this occurred, and her hero diplomatized, and, in short, kept back—why, she had advanced one step, without knowing it, to running away with another man.

It was unlucky that De Whiskerburg stept in. An Englishman would not have done. She knew them well, and despised them all; but he was new (dangerous novelty) with a cast of feelings, which, because they were strange, she believed to be unhackneyed, and he was impassioned. I need not go on.

So this star has dropped from out the heaven; so this precious pearl no longer gleams among the jewels of society, and there she breathes in a foreign land, among strange faces, and stranger customs; and when she thinks of what is past, laughs at some present emptiness, and tries to persuade her withering heart, that the mind is independent of country, and blood, and opinion. And her father's face no longer shines with its proud love, and her mother's

voice no longer whispers to her with sweet anxiety. Clouded is the brow of her bold brother, and dimmed is the radiancy of her budding sister's bloom.

Poor creature! that is to say, wicked woman!—for I am not one of those who set myself against the verdict of society, or ever omit to expedite, by a gentle kick, a falling friend. And yet, when I just remember beauty is beauty, and grace is grace, and kindness is kindness, although the beautiful, the graceful, and the amiable, do get in a scrape, I don't know how it is, I confess it is a weakness, but under these circumstances, I do not feel quite inclined to sneer. But this is wrong. We should not pity or pardon those who have yielded to great temptation, or perchance great provocation. Besides, it is right that our sympathy should be kept for the injured.

To stand amid the cold ashes of your desolate hearth, with all your Penates shivered at your feet; to find no smiling face meet your

return, no brow look gloomy, when you leave your door, to eat and sleep alone, to be bored with grumbling servants and with weekly bills; to have your children asking after Mamma; and no one to nurse your gout, or cure the influenza that rages in your household:—all this is doubtless hard to digest, and would *tell* in a novel, particularly if written by my friends Mr. Ward or Mr. Bulwer.

But is it true? I hope not. I, who am the loneliest of the sons of Adam, on whom no female ever will drop in, just for a quiet chat, except the Muse, who will not quite desert me, I have some idea of trying the comforts and the consolation of the blessed state; and, I confess, though of a mild and tolerant disposition—one, in fact, who can bear anything—I say, I should not exactly like—you understand me.

Therefore, I beg it to be most explicitly understood, that if any damsel, instead of going out to India, choose to come out to me on speculation, (I promise to give her a fair trial,)

I beg it, I say, to be most distinctly understood, that she must behave herself.

For Doctors' Commons are a common sore, or shore, the *cloaca maxima* of society, and, no doubt, tend greatly to the purity of our morals. But then, in England, you have to pay for virtue, as well as every thing else; and I cannot ensure the purity of my posterity at the cost of the purse of the present generation.

And so, Ma'm'selle, this is an understood condition. For the rest of your qualifications, fortune is no object; by which I mean to be understood, that if grace and beauty will not come, backed by those sweet acres and consols; why, I must take the picture without a frame, and wear the gem without its burnished bed. Love and economy will doubtless do wonders. For your style of loveliness, although like all others, I may have my penchant; nevertheless, blonde, or brunette, I shall be satisfied. I only insist upon an exquisite taste in costume. I hate an ill-dressed woman. In this accomplished age,

it is unnecessary to say any thing of accomplishments; and provided you do not copy prints, and will favour me with more of the piano than of your guitar, we shall not quarrel. You must not be at all fantastic, but a most obedient and quiet wife. You must condescend occasionally to turn a leaf of Jarrin or of Dolby; but on the other hand, you may eat as little as you like. Of myself, I say nothing, because egotism is not my forte; but if you wish to make enquiries, I am ready with the most respectable references, requiring, as I do, the same. and also, that all letters be post-paid.

CHAPTER XII.

The Duke had passed a stormy morning with his solicitor, who wished him to sell the Pen Bronnock property, which, being parliamentary, would command a price infinitely greater than might be expected from its relative income. The very idea of stripping his coronet of this brightest jewel, and thus sacrificing for wealth the ends of riches, greatly disordered him, and he more and more felt the want of a counsellor who could sympathize with his feelings, as well as arrange his fortunes. In this mood, he suddenly seized a pen, and wrote the following letter.

"——, House, Feb. 5, 182—

"MY DEAR MR. DACRE!

"I KEENLY feel that you are the last person to whom I should apply for the counsels or the consolation of friendship. I have long ago forfeited all claims to your regard, and your esteem I never possessed. Yet, if only because my career ought to end by my being an unsuccessful suppliant to the individual whom both virtue and nature pointed out to me as my best friend, and whose proffered and parental support I have so wantonly, however thoughtlessly, rejected, I do not regret that this is written. No feeling of false delicacy can prevent me from applying to one to whom I have long ago incurred incalculable obligations, and no feeling of false delicacy will, I hope, for a moment, prevent you from refusing the application of one who has acknowledged those obligations only by incalculable ingratitude.

"In a word, my affairs are, I fear, inextricably involved. I will not dwell upon the mad-

ness of my life; suffice that its consequences appal me. I have really endeavoured to examine into all details, and am prepared to meet the evil as becomes me; but, indeed, my head turns with the complicated interests which solicit my consideration; and I tremble lest, in the distraction of my mind, I may adopt measures which may baffle the very results I would attain. For myself, I am very ready to pay the penalty of my silly profligacy; and if exile, or any other personal infliction, can redeem the fortunes of the House that I have betrayed, I shall cheerfully submit to my destiny. My career has been productive of too little happiness to make me regret its termination.

"But I want advice: I want the counsel of one who can sympathize with my distracted feelings — who will look as much, or rather more, to the honour of my family than to the convenience of myself. I cannot obtain this from what are called men of business — and, with a blush, I confess I have no friend. In

this situation, my thoughts recur to one on whom, believe me, they have often dwelt; and although I have no right to appeal to your heart, for my father's sake you will perhaps pardon this address. Whatever you may resolve, my dearest Sir, rest assured that you and your family will always command the liveliest gratitude of one who regrets he may not subscribe himself

"Your obliged and devoted friend,

"St. James.

"I beg that you will not answer this, if your determination be what I anticipate and what I deserve."

"Dacre Dacre, Esq."
&c. &c. &c.

It was signed, sealed, and sent. He repented its transmission, when it was gone. He almost resolved to send a courier to stop the post. He continued walking up and down his room for the rest of the day: he could not eat, or read,

or talk. He was plunged in a nervous reverie. He passed the next day in the same state. Unable to leave his house, and unseen by visitors. he retired to his bed, feverish and dispirited. The morning came, and he woke from his hot and broken sleep at an early hour; yet he had not energy to rise. At last, the post arrived, and his letters were brought up to him. With a trembling hand and sinking breath he read these lines :—

"Castle Dacre, February 6, 182—

"MY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

"NOT only for your father's sake, but your own, are my services ever at your command. I have long been sensible of your amiable disposition, and there are circumstances which will ever make me your debtor.

"The announcement of the embarrassed state of your affairs fills me with sorrow and anxiety —yet I will hope the best. Young men, unconsciously, exaggerate adversity as well as pros-

perity. If you are not an habitual gamester, and I hope you have not been even an occasional one, unbounded extravagance could scarcely, in two years, have permanently injured your resources. However, bring down with you all papers, and be careful to make no arrangement, even of the slightest nature, until we meet.

"We expect you hourly. May desires her kindest regards, and begs me to express the great pleasure which she will feel at again finding you our guest. It is unnecessary for me to repeat how very sincerely I am your friend.

"D'ACRE DACRE."

He read the letter three times, to be sure he did not mistake the delightful import. Then he rang the bell with a vivacity which had not characterised him for many a month.

"Luigi! prepare to leave town to-morrow morning for an indefinite period. I shall only take you. I must dress immediately, and order breakfast and my horses."

The Duke of St. James had communicated the state of his affairs to Lord Fitz-pompey, who was very shocked, offered his best services, and also asked him to dinner, to meet the Marquess of Marylebone. The young Duke had also announced to his relatives, and to some of his particular friends, that he intended to travel for some time, and he well knew that their charitable experience would understand the rest. They understood every thing. The Marquess's party daily increased, and "The Universe" and "The New World" announced, that the young Duke was "done up."

There was one person to whom our hero would pay a farewell visit before he left London. This was Lady Caroline St. Maurice. He had called at Fitz-pompey House one or two mornings in the hope of finding her alone, and to-day he determined to be more successful. As he stopped his horse for the last time before his uncle's mansion, he could not help calling to mind the first visit which he had paid after

his arrival. But the door opens,—he enters,—he is announced,—and finds Lady Caroline alone!

Ten minutes passed away, as if the morning ride or evening ball were again to bring them together. The young Duke was still gay, and still amusing. At last he said with a smile—

"Do you know, Caroline, this is a farewell visit, and to you?"

She did not speak, but bent her head, as if she were intent upon some work, and so seated herself that her countenance was almost hid.

"You have heard from my uncle," continued he, laughing; "and if you have not heard from him, you have heard from somebody else, of my little scrape. A fool and his money, you know, Caroline, and a short reign and a merry one. When we get prudent, we are wondrous fond of proverbs. My reign has certainly been brief enough: with regard to the merriment, that is not quite so certain. I have little to regret except your society, sweet coz!"

"Dear George, how can you talk so of such serious affairs! If you knew how unhappy, how miserable I am, when I hear the cold, callous world speak of such things with indifference, you would at least not imitate their heartlessness."

"Dear Caroline!" said he, seating himself at her side.

"I cannot help thinking," she continued, "that you have not sufficiently exerted yourself about these embarrassments. You are, of course, too harassed—too much annoyed—too little accustomed to the energy and the detail of business, to interfere with any effect; but surely, surely, a friend might. You will not speak to my father, and perhaps you have your reasons; but is there no one else? St. Maurice, I know, has no head. Ah! George, I often feel, that if your relations had been different people, your fate might have been different. We are the fault."

He kissed her hand.

"Among all your intimates," she continued, "is there no one fit to be your counsellor — no one worthy of your confidence?"

"None," said the Duke bitterly, "none,— none. I have no friend among those intimates: there is not a man of them who cares to serve, or is capable of serving me."

"You have well considered?" asked Lady Caroline.

"Well, dear, well. I know them all by rote, — head and heart. Ah! my dear, dear Carry, if you were a man, what a nice little friend you would be!"

"You will always laugh, George. But I — I have no heart to laugh. This breaking up of your affairs, this exile, this losing you whom we all love — love so dearly, makes me quite miserable!"

He kissed her hand again.

"I dare say," she continued, "you have thought me as heartless as the rest, because I never spoke. But I knew — that is, I feared—

or, rather, hoped, that a great part of what I heard was false; and so I thought notice was unnecessary, and might be painful. Yet, Heaven knows, there are few subjects that have been oftener in my thoughts, or cost me more anxiety. Are you sure you have no friend?"

"I have you, Caroline. I did not say I had no friends: I said, I had none among those intimates you talked of; that there was no man among them capable of the necessary interference, even if he were willing to undertake it. But I am not friendless—not quite forlorn, love! My fate has given me a friend, that I but little deserve; one whom if I had prized better, I should not perhaps have been obliged to put his friendship to so severe a trial. To-morrow, Caroline, I depart for Castle Dacre; there is my friend. Alas! how little have I deserved such a boon!"

"Dacre!" exclaimed Lady Caroline, "Mr. Dacre! Oh! you have made me so happy,

George! Mr. Dacre is the very, very person,—that is, the very best person you could possibly have applied to."

"Good b'ye, Caroline," said his Grace, rising.

She burst into tears.

Never, never had she looked so lovely: never, never had he loved her so entirely! Tears!—tears shed for him! Oh! what, what is grief, when a lovely woman remains to weep over our misfortunes! Could he be miserable—could his career indeed be unfortunate, when this was reserved for him? He was on the point of pledging his affection,—but to leave her under such circumstances was impossible: to neglect Mr. Dacre was equally so. He determined to arrange his affairs with all possible promptitude, and then to hasten up, and entreat her to share his diminished fortunes. But he would not go without whispering hope—without leaving some soft thought to lighten her lonely hours. He caught her in his arms; he covered her sweet, small mouth with kisses,

and whispered, in the midst of their pure embrace —

"Love!—Love! I shall soon return, and we will yet be happy."

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

THE YOUNG DUKE.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

THE YOUNG DUKE.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

CHAP. I.

Miss Dacre, although she was prepared to greet the Duke of St. James with cordiality, did not anticipate with equal pleasure the arrival of the pages and the jager. Infinite had been the disturbances they had occasioned during their first visit, and endless the complaints of the steward and the housekeeper. The men-servants were initiated in the mysteries of dominoes, and the maid-servants in the tactics of flirtation. Karlstein was the hero of the under-butlers, and even the trusty guardian of the

cellar himself was too often on the point of obtaining the German's opinion of his master's German wines. Gaming, and drunkenness, and love, the most productive of all the teeming causes of human sorrow, had, in a week, sadly disordered the well-regulated household of Castle Dacre; and nothing but the impetuosity of our hero would have saved his host's establishment from utter perdition. Miss Dacre was, therefore, not less pleased than surprised, when the britscha of the Duke of St. James discharged, on a fine afternoon, its noble master, attended only by the faithful Luigi, at the terrace of the Castle.

A few country cousins, fresh from Cumberland, who knew nothing of the Duke of St. James, except from a stray number of "The Universe," which occasionally stole down to corrupt the pure waters of their lakes, were the only guests. Mr. Dacre grasped our hero's hand with a warmth and expression which were unusual to him, but which conveyed, better than words,

the depth of his friendship; and his daughter, who looked more beautiful than ever, advanced with a beaming face and joyous tone, which quite reconciled the Duke of St. James to being a ruined man.

The presence of strangers limited their conversation to subjects of general interest. At dinner, the Duke took care to be most agreeable: he talked in a very unaffected manner, and particularly to the cousins, who were all delighted with him, and found him "quite a different person to what they had fancied." The evening passed over, and even lightly, without the aid of *ecarté*, romances, or gallops. Mr. Dacre chatted with old Mr. Montingford, and old Mrs. Montingford sat still admiring her "girls," who stood still admiring May Dacre singing or talking, and occasionally reconciled us to their occasional silence, by a frequent and extremely hearty laugh — that Cumberland laugh, which never outlives a single season in London.

And the Duke of St. James — what did he do? It must be confessed, that in some points he greatly resembled the Misses Montingford, for he was both silent and admiring — but he never laughed. Yet he was not dull, and was careful not to show that he had cares, which is vulgar. If a man be gloomy, let him keep to himself. No one has a right to go croaking about society, or, what is worse, looking as if he stifled grief. These fellows should be put in the pound. I like a good broken heart, or so, now and then; but then we should retire to the Sierra Morena mountains, and live upon locusts and wild honey, not "dine out" with our cracked cores, and while we are meditating suicide, the Gazette, or the Chiltern Hundreds, damn a vintage, or eulogize an *entrée*.

And as for cares—what are cares when a man is in love? Once more they had met,—once more he gazed upon that sunny and sparkling face, — once more he listened to that sweet and thrilling voice, which sounded like a bird-like

burst of music upon a summer morning. She moved, and each attitude was fascination. She was still; and he regretted that she moved. Now her neck, now her hair, now her round arm, now her tapering waist, ravished his attention: now he is in ecstasies, with her twinkling foot; now he is dazzled with her glancing hand.

Once more he was at Dacre! How different was this meeting to their first! Then, she was cold, almost cutting; then she was disregardful, almost contemptuous; but then he had hoped,—ah! madman, he had more than hoped. Now she was warm, almost affectionate; now she listened to him with readiness, ay! almost courted his conversation. And now he could only despair. As he stood alone before the fire, chewing this bitter cud, she approached him.

"How good you were to come directly!" she said with a smile, which melted his heart. "I fear, however, you will not find us as merry as before. But you can make any thing amusing.

Come then, and sing to these damsels. Do you know they are half afraid of you? and I cannot persuade them that a terrible magician has not assumed, for the nonce, the air and appearance of a young gentleman of distinction."

He smiled, but could not speak. Repartee sadly deserts the lover; yet smiles, under those circumstances, are very eloquent; and the eye, after all, speaks much more to the purpose, than the tongue. Forgetting every thing, except the person who addressed him, he offered her his hand, and advanced to the group, which surrounded the piano.

CHAPTER II.

THE next morning was passed by the Duke of St. James in giving Mr. Dacre his report of the state of his affairs. His banker's accounts, his architect's estimates, his solicitor's statements, were all brought forward and discussed. A ride generally with Miss Dacre and one of her young friends, dinner, and a short evening, and eleven o'clock, sent them all to repose. Thus glided on a fortnight. The mornings continued to be passed in business. Affairs were more complicated than his Grace had imagined, who had no idea of detail. He gave all the information that he could, and made his friend master of his particular feelings. For the rest,

Mr. Dacre was soon involved in much correspondence; and although the young Duke could no longer assist him, he recommended, and earnestly begged, that he would remain at Dacre; for he could perceive, better than his Grace, that our hero was labouring under a great deal of excitement, and that his health was impaired. A regular course of life was therefore as necessary for his constitution, as it was desirable for all other reasons.

Behold, then, our hero domesticated at Dacre—rising at nine, joining a family breakfast, taking a quiet ride, or moderate stroll, sometimes looking into a book, but he was no great reader; sometimes fortunate enough in achieving a stray game of billiards, usually with a Miss Montingford, and retiring to rest about the time that in London his most active existence generally began. Was he dull? was he wearied? He was never lighter hearted, or more contented, in his life. Happy he could not allow himself to be styled, because the very

cause which breathed this calm over his existence seemed to portend a storm, which could not be avoided. It was the thought, the presence, the smile, the voice of May Dacre, that imparted this new interest to existence; that being who never could be his! He shuddered to think that all this must end; but although he never indulged again in the great hope, his sanguine temper allowed him to thrust away the future, and to participate in all the joys of the flowing hour.

At the end of February, the Montingfords departed, and now the Duke was the only guest at Dacre; nor did he hear that any others were expected. He was alone with her again; often was he alone with her, and never without a strange feeling coming over his frame, which made him tremble. Mr. Dacre, a man of active habits, always found occupation in the various interests of a large estate, and usually requested, or rather required, the Duke of St. James to be his companion. He was desirous that the

Duke should not be alone, and ponder too much over the past; nor did he conceal his wishes from his daughter, who on all occasions, as the Duke observed with gratification, seconded the benevolent intentions of her parent. Nor did our hero indeed wish to be alone, or to ponder over the past. He was quite contented with the present; but he did not want to ride with papa, and took every opportunity to shirk; —all which Mr. Dacre set down to the indolence of exhaustion, and the inertness of a mind without an object.

"I am going to ride over to Doncaster, George," said Mr. Dacre one morning at breakfast. "I think that you had better order your horse too. A good ride will rouse you, and you should show yourself there."

"Oh! very well, Sir; but,—but I think that——"

"But what?" asked Mr. Dacre, smiling.

The Duke looked to May Dacre, who seemed to take pity on his idleness.

"You make him ride too much, papa. Leave him at home with me. I have a long round to-day, and want an escort. I will take him instead of my friend Tom Carter. You must carry a basket though," said she, turning to the Duke, "and run for the doctor if he be wanted, and, in short, do any odd message that turns up."

So Mr. Dacre departed alone, and shortly after his daughter and the Duke of St. James set out on their morning ramble. Many were the cottages at which they called, — many the old dames, after whose rheumatisms, and many the young damsels after whose fortunes they inquired. Old Dame Rawdon was worse or better; worse last night, but better this morning. She was always better when Miss called. Miss's face always did her good. And Fanny was very comfortable at Squire Wentworth's, and the housekeeper was very kind to her, thanks to Miss saying a word to the great Lady. And old John Selby was quite about

again. Miss's stuff had done him a world of good, to say nothing of Mr. Dacre's generous old wine.

"And is this your second son, Dame Rishworth?"

"No; that bees our fourth," said the good woman, maternally arranging the urchin's thin, white, flat, straight, unmanageable hair. "We are thinking what to do with him, Miss. He wants to go out to *sa*rvice. Since Jem Eustace got on so, I don't know what the matter is with the lads; but I think we shall have none of them in the fields soon. He can clean knives and shoes very well, Miss. Mr. Bradford, at the Castle, was saying t'other day, that perhaps he might want a young hand. You haven't heard anything, I suppose, Miss?"

"And what is your name, Sir?" asked Miss Dacre.

"Bobby Rishworth, Miss!"

"Well, Bobby, I must consult Mr. Bradford."

"We be in great trouble, Miss," said the next cottager. "We be in great trouble. Tom, poor Tom, was out last night, and the keepers will give him up. The good man has done all he can,—we have all done all we can, Miss, and you see how it ends. He is the first of the family that ever went out. I hope that will be considered, Miss. Seventy years, our fathers before us, have we been on the 'state, and nothing ever sworn agin us. I hope that will be considered, Miss. I am sure if Tom had been an underkeeper, as Mr. Roberts once talked of, this would have never happened. I hope that will be considered, Miss. We are in great trouble sure*ly*. Tom, you see, was our first, Miss."

"I never interfere about poaching, you know, Mrs. Jones. Mr. Dacre is the best judge of such matters. But you can go to him, and say that I sent you. I am afraid, however, that he has heard of Tom before."

"Only that night at Milwood, Miss, and

then, you see, he had been drinking with Squire Ridge's people. I hope that will be considered, Miss."

"Well, well, go up to the Castle."

"Pray, be seated, Miss," said a very neat-looking mistress of a very neat little farm-house. "Pray, be seated, Sir. Let me dust it first. Dust will get everywhere, do what we can. And how's Pa, Miss? He has not given me a look-in for many a day,—not since he was a-hunting: bless me, if it ayn't a fortnight. This day fortnight he tasted our ale, sure enough. Will you take a glass, Sir?"

"You are very good. No, I thank you; not to-day."

"Yes, give him a glass, Nurse. He is very unwell, and it will do him good."

She brought the sparkling amber fluid, and the Duke did justice by his draught.

"I shall have fine honey for you, Miss, this year," said the old Nurse. "Are you fond of honey, Sir? Our honey is well known about.

I don't know how it is, but we do always contrive to manage the bees. How fond some people are of honey, good Lord! Now, when you were a little girl (I knew this young Lady, Sir, before you did), you always used to be fond of honey. I remember one day—let me see—it must be—ay! truly, that it is—eighteen years ago next Martinmas. I was a-going down the nursery stairs, just to my poor mistress's room, and I had you in my arms (for I knew this young Lady, Sir, before you did)—Well! I was a-going down the stairs, as I just said, to my poor dear mistress's room, with you, who was then a little un indeed (bless your smiling face! you cost me many a weary hour when you were weaned, Miss. That you did! Some thought you would never get through it; but I always said, while there is life, there is hope; and so, you see, I were right)—but, as I was saying, I was a-going down the stairs to my poor dear mistress, and I had a gallipot in my hand, a covered gallipot, with some leeches.

And just as I had got to the bottom of the stairs, and was a-going into my poor dear mistress's room, said you (I never shall forget it), —said you, 'Honey, honey, Nurse.' She thought it were honey, Sir. So, you see, she were always very fond of honey (for I knew this young Lady long before you did, Sir)."

"Are you quite sure of that, Nurse?" said Miss Dacre; "I think this is an older friend than you imagine. You remember the little Duke; do not you? This is the little Duke. Do you think he has grown?"

"Now! bless my life! is it so indeed? Well, be sure, he has grown. I always thought he would turn out well, Miss, though Dr. Pretyman were always a-preaching, and talking his prophecycations. I always thought he would turn out well at last. Bless me! how he has grown, indeed! Perhaps he grows too fast, and that makes him weak. Nothing better than a glass of ale for weak people. I remember when Dr. Pretyman ordered it for my poor

dear mistress. 'Give her ale,' said the Doctor, 'as strong as it can be brewed;' and sure enough, my poor dear master had it brewed! Have you done growing, Sir? You was ever a troublesome child. Often and often have I called George, George, Georgy, Georgy Porgy, and he never would come near me, though he heard all the time as plainly as he does now. Bless me! he has grown indeed!"

"But I have turned out well at last, Nurse, eh?" asked the Duke.

"Ay! sure enough; I always said so. Often and often have I said, he will turn out well at last. You be going, Miss? I thank you for looking in. My duty to my master. I was thinking of bringing up one of those cheeses he likes so."

"Ay! do, Nurse. He can eat no cheese but yours."

As they wandered home, they talked of Lady Caroline, to whom the Duke mentioned that he must write. He had once intended distinctly

to have explained his feelings to her in a letter from Dacre; but each day he postponed the close of his destiny, although without hope. He lingered, and he lingered round May Dacre, as a bird flutters round the fruit which is already grasped by a boy. Circumstances, which we shall relate, had already occurred, which confirmed the suspicion he had long entertained, that Arundel Dacre was his favoured rival. Impressed with the folly of again encouraging hope, yet unable to harden his heart against her continual fascination, the softness of his manner indicated his passion, and his calm and somewhat languid carriage also told her it was hopeless. Perhaps, after all, there is no demeanour more calculated to melt obdurate woman. The gratification he received from her society was evident, yet he never indulged in that gallantry of which he was once so proud. When she approached him, a mild smile lit up his pensive countenance; he adopted her suggestions, but made none; he listened to her

remarks with interest, but, no longer bandied repartee. Delicately he impressed her with the absolute power which she might exercise over his mind.

"I write myself to Caroline to-morrow,' said Miss Dacre.

"Ah! Then I need not write. I talked of going up sooner. Have the kindness to explain why I do not: — peremptory orders from Mr. Dacre—fresh air, and—"

"Arithmetic: I understand you get on most admirably."

"My follies," said the Duke with a serious air, "have at least been productive of one good end—they have amused you."

"Nay! I have done too many foolish things myself, any more to laugh at my neighbours. As for yourself, you have only committed those which were inseparable from your situation; and few, like the Duke of St. James, would so soon have opened their eyes to the truth of their conduct."

"A compliment from you repays me for all."

"Self-approbation does, which is much better than compliments from any one. See! there is Papa—and Arundel too: let us run up!"

CHAPTER III.

The Duke of St. James had, on his arrival at Dacre, soon observed, that a very constant correspondence was maintained between Miss Dacre and her cousin. There was no attempt to conceal the fact from any of the guests, and as that young gentleman was now engaged in an affair interesting to all his friends, every letter generally contained some paragraph almost as interesting to the Montingfords as herself, and which was accordingly read aloud. Mr. Arundel Dacre was candidate for the vacant representation of a town in a distant county. He had been disappointed in his views on the Borough, about which he had returned to Eng-

land, but had been nevertheless persuaded by his cousin to remain in his native country. During this period, he had been a great deal at Castle Dacre, and had become much more intimate and unreserved with his uncle, who observed with the greatest satisfaction this change in his character, and lost no opportunity of deserving and increasing the confidence for which he had so long unavailingly yearned, and which was now so unexpectedly proffered.

The borough for which Arundel Dacre was about to stand was in Sussex, a county in which his family had no property, and very slight connection. Yet at the place, the Catholic interest was strong, and on that, and the usual Whig influence, he ventured. His desire to be a member of the Legislature, at all, and from early times extreme, was now greatly heightened by the prospect of being present at the impending Catholic debate. After an absence of three weeks, he had hurried to York-

shire for four-and-twenty hours, to give a report of the state of his canvass, and the probability of his success. In that success all were greatly interested, but none more so than May Dacre, whose thoughts indeed seemed to dwell on no other subject, and who expressed herself with a warmth which betrayed her secret feelings. Had the place only been in Yorkshire, she was sure he must have succeeded. She was the best canvasser in the world, and every body agreed that Harry Greystoke owed his election merely to her insinuating tongue and unrivalled powers of scampering, by which she had completely baffled the tactics of Lady Amarantha Germain, who thought that a canvass was only a long morning call, and might be achieved in a cachemere and a britscha.

The young Duke, who had seen very little of his second since the eventful day, greeted him with warmth, and was welcomed with a frankness which he had never before experienced from his friend. Excited by rapid travel and

his present course of life, and not damped by the unexpected presence of any strangers, Arundel Dacre seemed quite a changed man, and talked immensely.

"Come, May, I must have a kiss! I have been kissing as pretty girls as you. There now! you all said I never should be a popular candidate. I get regularly huzzaed every day,—so they have been obliged to hire a band of butchers' boys to pelt me. Whereupon I compare myself to Cæsar set upon in the Senate House, and get immense cheering in "The County Chronicle," which I have bribed. If you knew the butts of wine, the Heidelburg tuns of ale, that I have drunk during the last fortnight, you would stare indeed. As much as the Lake: but then I have to talk so much, that the ardour of my eloquence, like the hot flannels of the Humane Society, save me from the injurious effects of all this liquid."

"But will you get in,—but will you get in?" exclaimed his cousin.

" 'Tis not in mortals to command success; but—"

"Pooh! pooh! you must command it!"

" Well, then, I have an excellent chance; and the only thing against me is, that my committee are quite sure. But really I think, that if the Protestant overseers, whom, by the by, May, I cannot persuade that I am a heretic (it is very hard that a man is not believed when he says he shall be damned)—if they do not empty the workhouse, we shall do. But let us go in, for I have travelled all night, and must be off to-morrow morning."

They entered the house, and the Duke quitted the family group. About an hour afterwards, he sauntered to the music-room. As he opened the door, his eyes lighted upon May Dacre and her cousin. They were standing before the fire, with their backs to the door. His arm was wound carelessly round her waist, and with his other hand he supported, with her, a miniature, at which she was looking. The

Duke could not catch her countenance, which was completely hid; but her companion was not gazing on the picture: his head, a little turned, indicated that there was a living countenance more interesting to him than all the skill of the most cunning artists. Part of his cheek was alone perceptible, and that was burning red.

All this was the work of a moment. The Duke stared, turned pale, closed the door without a sound, and retired unperceived. When he was sure that he could no longer be observed, he gasped for breath, a cold dew covered his frame, his joints loosened, and his sinking heart gave him that sickening sensation when life appears utterly worthless, and ourselves utterly contemptible. Yet what had he witnessed? A confirmation of what he had never doubted. What was this woman to him? Alas! how supreme was the power with which she ruled his spirit! And this Dacre,—this Arundel Dacre,—how he hated him! Oh!

that they were hand to hand, and sword to sword, in some fair field, and there decide it! He must conquer; he felt that. Already his weapon pierced that craven heart, and ripped open that breast which was to be the pillow of ——. Hell! hell! He rushed to his room, and began a letter to Caroline St. Maurice; but he could not write; and after scribbling over a quire of paper, he threw the sheets to the flames, and determined to ride up to town to-morrow.

The dinner bell sounded. Could he meet them? Ay! meet them! Defy them! Insult them! He descended to the dining-room. He heard her musical and liquid voice; the scowl upon his brow melted away; but, gloomy and silent, he took his seat, and gloomy and silent he remained. Little he spoke, and that little was scarcely courteous. But Arundel had enough to say. He was the hero of the party. Well he might be. Story after story of old maids and young widows, sturdy butchers

and corrupt coal-merchants, sparkled away; but a faint smile was all the tribute of the Duke, and a tribute that was seldom paid.

"You are not well!" said Miss Dacre to him in a low voice.

"I believe I am," answered he shortly.

"You do not seem quite so," she replied with an air of surprise.

"I believe I have got a headache," he retorted with very little more cordiality. She did not again speak, but she was evidently annoyed.

CHAPTER IV.

There certainly is a dark delight in being miserable — a sort of strange satisfaction in being savage, which is uncommonly fascinating. One of the greatest pests of my philosophy is, that I can no longer be sullen, and most sincerely do I regret it. To brood over misery — to flatter yourself that there is not a single being who cares for your existence, and not a single circumstance to make that existence desirable: —Oh! there is wild witchery in it, which I doubt whether opium can reach, and am sure that wine cannot.

And the Duke! He soon left the uncle and nephew to their miserable speculations about

the state of the poll, and took his sullen way, with the air of Ajax, to the terrace. Here he stalked along in a fierce reverie; asked why he had been born; why he did not die; why he should live, and so on. His wounded pride, which had borne so much, fairly got the mastery, and revenged itself for all insults on Love, whom it ejected most scurvily. He blushed to think how he had humiliated himself before her. She was the cause of that humiliation, and of every disagreeable sensation that he was experiencing; he began therefore to imprecate vengeance, walked himself into a fair, cold-hearted malicious passion, and avowed most distinctly that he hated her. As for him, most ardently he hoped that, some day or other, they might again meet at six o'clock in the morning in Kensington Gardens, but in a different relation to each other.

It was dark when he entered the Castle. He was about ascending to his own room, when he determined not to be cowed, and resolved to

show himself the regardless witness of their mutual loves: so he repaired to the drawing-room. At one end of this very spacious apartment, Mr. Dacre and Arundel were walking in deep converse; at the other sat Miss Dacre at a table reading. The Duke seized a chair without looking at her, dragged it along to the fire-place, and there seating himself, with his arms folded, his feet on the fender, and his chair tilting, he appeared to be lost in the abstracting contemplation of the consuming fuel.

Some minutes had passed, when a slight sound, like a fluttering bird, made him look up:—Miss Dacre was standing at his side.

"Is your head better?" she asked him, in a soft voice.

"Thank you, it is quite well," he replied, in a sullen one.

There was a moment's pause, and then she again spoke.

"I am sure you are not well."

"Perfectly, thank you."

"Something has happened then," she said, rather imploringly.

"What should have happened?" he rejoined, very pettishly.

"You are very strange, very unlike what you always are."

"What I always am, is of no consequence to myself, or to any one else; and as for what I am now, I cannot always command my feelings, though I shall take care that they are not again observed."

"I have offended you?"

"Then you have shown your discretion, for you should always offend the forlorn."

"I did not think before, that you were bitter."

"That has made me bitter, which has made all others so."

"What?"

"Disappointment."

Another pause, yet she did not go.

"I will not quarrel, and so you need not try. You are consigned to my care, and I am to amuse you. What shall we do?"

"Do what you like, Miss Dacre, but spare, oh! spare me, your pity!"

"My Lord! you do indeed surprise me. Pity! I was not thinking of pity! But you are indeed serious, and I leave you."

He turned;—he seized her hand.

"Nay! do not go. Forgive me," he said, —"forgive me, for I am most miserable."

"Why, why are you?"

"Oh! do not ask, you agonize me."

"Shall I sing? shall I charm the evil spirit?"

"Any thing."

She tripped to the piano, and an air, bursting like the Spring, and gay as a village feast, filled the room with its delight. He listened, and each instant the chilly weight loosened from his heart. Her balmy voice now came upon his ear, breathing joy and cheerfulness,

content and love. Could love be the savage passion which lately subjugated his soul? He rose from his seat, he walked about the room; each minute, his heart was lighter, his brow more smooth. A thousand thoughts, beautiful and quivering like the twilight, glanced o'er his mind, in indistinct but exquisite tumults and hope, like the voice of an angel in a storm, was heard above all. He lifted a chair gently from the ground, and stealing to the enchantress, seated himself at her side. So softly he reached her, that for a moment he was unperceived. She turned her head, and her eyes met his. Even the ineffable incident was forgotten, as he marked the strange gush of lovely light, that seemed to say——what to think of was, after all, madness.

CHAPTER V.

THE storm was past. He vowed that a dark thought should not again cross his mind. It was fated that she should not be his; but it was some miserable satisfaction, that he was only rejected in favour of an attachment which had grown with her years, and had strengthened with her stature, and in deference to an engagement hallowed by time as well as by affection. It was deadly indeed to remember, that Fate seemed to have destined him for that happy position, and that his folly had rejected the proffered draught of bliss. He blasphemed against the Fitz-pompeys. However, he did not leave Dacre at the same time as Arundel,

but lingered on. His affairs were far from being arranged. The Irish business gave great trouble, and he determined therefore to remain.

It was ridiculous to talk of feeding a passion which was not susceptible of increase. Her society was Heaven; and he resolved to enjoy it, although he was to be expelled. As for his loss of fortune, it gave him not a moment's care. Without her, he felt he could not live in England, and, even ruined, he would be a match for an Italian prince.

So he continued her companion, each day rising with purer feelings and a more benevolent heart; each day more convinced of the falseness of his past existence, and of the possibility of happiness to a well-regulated mind; each day more conscious that duty is nothing more than self-knowledge, and the performance of it consequently the developement of feelings which are the only true source of self-gratification. He mourned over the opportunities which he had forfeited of conducing to the happiness of others and himself. Sometimes

he half resolved to remain in England and devote himself to his tenantry; but passion blinded him, and he felt that he had erred too far, ever to regain the right road.

The election for which Arundel Dacre was a candidate came on. Each day the state of the poll arrived. It was nearly equal to the last. Their agitation was terrible, but forgotten in the deep mortification which they experienced at the announcement of his defeat. He talked to the public very boldly of petitioning, and his certainty of ultimate success; but he let them know privately, that he had no intention of the first, and no chance of the second. Even Mr. Dacre could not conceal his deep disappointment; but May was quite in despair. Even if her father could find means of securing him a seat another time, the present great opportunity was lost.

"Surely we can make some arrangement for next session," said the Duke, whispering hope to her.

"Oh! no, no, no; so much depended upon

this. It is not merely his taking a part in the debate, but — but — Arundel is so odd, and every thing was staked upon this. I cannot tell you what depended upon it. He will leave England directly."

She did not attempt to conceal her agitation. The Duke rose, and paced the room in a state scarcely less moved. A thought had suddenly flashed upon him. Their marriage doubtless depended upon this success. He knew something of Arundel Dacre, and had heard more. He was convinced of the truth of his suspicion. Either the nephew would not claim her hand, until he had carved out his own fortunes, or perhaps the uncle made his distinction the condition of his consent. Yet this was odd. It was all odd. A thousand things had occurred which equally puzzled him. Yet he had seen enough to weigh against a thousand thoughts.

CHAPTER VI.

ANOTHER fortnight glided away, and he was still at the Castle, still the constant and almost sole companion of May Dacre.

It is breakfast; the servant is delivering the letter-bag to Mr. Dacre. Interesting moment! when you extend your hand for the billet of a mistress, and receive your tailor's bill! How provokingly slow are most domestic chieftains in this anxious operation! They turn the letters over and over, and upside and down; arrange, confuse, mistake, and sort; pretend, like Champollion, to decypher illegible franks, and deliver with a slight remark, which is intended as a friendly admonition, the documents

of the unlucky wight who encourages unprivileged correspondents.

A letter was delivered to Miss Dacre. She started, exclaimed, blushed, and tore it open.

"Only you, only you," she said, extending her hand to the young Duke, "only you were capable of this!"

It was a letter from Arundel Dacre, not only written but franked by him.

It explained every thing that the Duke of St. James might have told them before; but he preferred hearing all himself, from the delighted and delightful lips of Miss Dacre, who read to her father her cousin's letter.

The Duke of St. James had returned him for one of his Cornish boroughs. It appeared that Lord St. Maurice was the previous member, who had accepted the Chilterns in his favour.

"You were determined to surprise, as well as delight us," said Mr. Dacre.

"I am no admirer of mysteries," said the Duke; "but the fact is, in the present case,

it was not in my power to give you any positive information, and I had no desire to provide you, after your late disappointment, with new sources of anxiety. The only person I could take the liberty with, at so short a notice, was St. Maurice. He, you know, is a young liberal; but he cannot forget that he is the son of a Tory, and has no very great ambition to take any active part in affairs at present. I anticipated less difficulty with him than with his father. St. Maurice can command me again when it suits him; but, I confess to you, I have been surprised at my uncle's kindness in this affair. I really have not done justice to his character before, and regret it. He has behaved in the most kind-hearted and the most liberal manner, and put me under obligations which I never shall forget. He seems as desirous of serving my friend as myself; and I assure you, Sir, it would give you pleasure to know in what terms of respect he speaks of your family, and particularly of Arundel."

"Arundel says he shall take his seat the morning of the debate. How very near! how admirably managed! Oh! I never shall recover my surprise and delight! How good you are!"

"He takes his seat, then, to-morrow," said Mr. Dacre in a musing tone. "My letters give a rather nervous account of affairs. We are to win it, they hope, but by two only. As for the Lords, the majority against us will, it is said, be somewhat smaller than usual. We shall never triumph, George, till May is M. P. for the County. Cannot you return her for Pen Bronnock too?"

They talked, as you may suppose, of nothing else. At last, Mr. Dacre remembered an appointment with his bailiff, and proposed to the Duke to join him, who acceded.

"And I to be left alone this morning, then!" said Miss Dacre. "I am sure, as they say of children, I can set to nothing."

"Come and ride with us, then!"

"An excellent idea! Let us scamper over to Hauteville! I am just in the humour for a gallop up the avenue, and feel half emancipated already with a Dacre in the House. Oh! to-morrow, how nervous I shall be!"

"I will dispatch Barrington, then," said Mr. Dacre, "and join you in ten minutes."

"How good you are!" said Miss Dacre to the Duke. "How can we thank you enough! What can we do for you!"

"You have thanked me enough. What have I done, after all? My opportunity to serve my friends is brief. Is it wonderful that I seize the opportunity?"

"Brief! brief! Why do you always say so! Why do you talk so of leaving us?"

"My visit to you has been already too long. It must soon end, and I remain not in England when it ceases."

"Come and live at Hauteville, and be near us?"

He faintly smiled as he said, "No, no; my

doom is fixed. Hauteville is the last place that I should choose for my residence, even if I remained in England. But I hear the horses."

The important night at length arrived, or rather the important messenger, who brought down, express, a report of its proceedings to Castle Dacre.

Nothing is more singular than the various success of men in the House of Commons. Fellows who have been the oracles of coteries from their birth, who have gone through the regular process of gold medals, senior wranglerships, and double foists, who have nightly sat down amid tumultuous cheering in debating societies, and can harangue with an unruffled forehead and an unfaltering voice, from one end of a dinner-table to the other, who, on all occasions, have something to say, and can speak with fluency on what they know nothing about — no sooner rise in the House, than their spells desert them. All their effrontery vanishes. Common-place ideas are rendered even more

uninteresting by monotonous delivery; and keenly alive as, even, boobies are in those sacred walls to the ridiculous, no one appears more thoroughly aware of his unexpected and astounding deficiencies than the orator himself. He regains his seat, hot and hard, sultry and stiff, with a burning cheek and an icy hand, repressing his breath lest it should give evidence of an existence of which he is ashamed, and clenching his fist, that the pressure may secretly convince him that he has not as completely annihilated his stupid body as his false reputation.

On the other hand, persons, whom the women have long deplored, and the men long pitied, as having no "manner," who blush when you speak to them, and blunder when they speak to you, suddenly jump up in the House with a self-confidence, which is only equalled by their consummate ability. And so it was with Arundel Dacre. He rose the first night that he took his seat, a great disadvantage, of which no one was more sensible than him-

self, and for two hours and a half he harangued the fullest House that had ever been assembled, with the self-possession of an habitual debater. His clenching argument, and his luminous detail, might have been expected from one who had the reputation of having been a student. What was more wonderful was, the withering sarcasm that blasted like the Simoom, the brilliant sallies of wit that flashed like a sabre, the gushing eddies of humour that drowned all opposition and overwhelmed those ponderous and unwieldy arguments which the producers announced as rocks, but which he proved to be porpoises. Never was there such a triumphant *début;* and a peroration of genuine eloquence, because of genuine feeling, concluded amid the long and renewed cheers of all parties.

The truth is, Eloquence is the child of Knowledge. When a mind is full, like a wholesome river, it is also clear. Confusion and obscurity are much oftener the results of ignorance than of inefficiency. Few are the men who cannot

express their meaning, when the occasion demands the energy; as the lowest will defend their lives with acuteness, and sometimes even with eloquence. They are masters of their subject. Knowledge must be gained by ourselves. Mankind may supply us with facts; but the results, even if they agree with previous ones, must be the work of our own mind. To make others feel, we must feel ourselves; and to feel ourselves, we must be natural. This we can never be, when we are vomiting forth the dogmas of the schools. Knowledge is not a mere collection of words; and it is a delusion to suppose that thought can be obtained by the aid of any other intellect than our own. What is repetition, by a curious mystery, ceases to be truth, even if it were truth, when it was first heard; as the shadow in a mirror, though it move and mimic all the actions of vitality, is not life. When a man is not speaking, or writing, from his own mind, he is as insipid company as a looking-glass.

Before a man can address a popular assembly with command, he must know something of mankind, and he can know nothing of mankind without he knows something of himself. Self-knowledge is the property of that man whose passions have their play, but who ponders over their results. Such a man sympathizes by inspiration with his kind. He has a key to every heart. He can divine, in the flash of a single thought, all that they require, all that they wish. Such a man speaks to their very core. All feel that a master-hand tears off the veil of cant, with which, from necessity, they have enveloped their souls; for cant is nothing more than the sophistry which results from attempting to account for what is unintelligible, or to defend what is improper.

Perhaps, although we use the term, we never have had oratory in England. There is an essential difference between oratory and debating. Oratory seems an accomplishment confined to the ancients, unless the French preach-

ers may put in their claim, and some of the Irish lawyers. Mr. Shiel's speech in Kent was a fine oration; and the boobies who taunted him for having got it by rote, were not aware that in doing so he only wisely followed the examples of Pericles, Demosthenes, Lysias, Isocrates, Hortensius, Cicero, Cæsar, and every great orator of antiquity. Oratory is essentially the accomplishment of antiquity: it was their most efficient mode of communicating thought; it was their substitute for printing.

I like a good debate, and, when a stripling, used often to be stifled in the Gallery, or enjoy the easier privileges of a member's son. I like, I say, a good debate, and have no objection to a due mixture of bores, which are a relief. I remember none of the giants of former days; but I have heard Canning. He was a consummate rhetorician; but there seemed to me a dash of commonplace in all that he said, and frequent indications of the absence of an original mind. To the last, he never got clear of

"Good God, Sir!" and all the other hackneyed ejaculations of his youthful debating clubs. The most commanding speaker that I ever listened to is, I think, Sir Francis Burdett. I never heard him in the House,—but at an Election. He was full of music, grace, and dignity, even amid all the vulgar tumult; and, unlike all mob orators, raised the taste of the populace to him, instead of lowering his own to theirs. His colleague, Mr. Hobhouse, seemed to me ill qualified for a demagogue, though he spoke with power. He is rather too elaborate, and a little heavy, but fluent, and never weak. His thoughtful and highly cultivated mind maintains him under all circumstances; and his breeding never deserts him. Sound sense comes recommended from his lips by the language of a scholar and the urbanity of a gentleman.

Mr. Brougham, at present, reigns paramount in the House of Commons. I think the lawyer has spoiled the statesman. He is said to have very great powers of sarcasm. From what I

have observed there, I should think very little ones would be quite sufficient. Many a sneer withers in those walls, which would scarcely, I think, blight a currant-bush out of them; and I have seen the House convulsed with raillery, which, in other society, would infallibly settle the rallier to be a bore beyond all tolerance. Even an idiot can raise a smile. They are so good-natured, or find it so dull. Mr. Canning's *badinage* was the most successful, though I confess I have listened to few things more calculated to make a man gloomy. But the House always ran riot, taking every thing for granted, and cracked their universal sides before he opened his mouth. The fault of Mr. Brougham is, that he holds no intellect at present in great dread, and, consequently, allows himself on all occasions to run wild. Few men hazard more unphilosophical observations; but he is safe, because there is no one to notice them. On all great occasions, Mr. Brougham has come up to the mark, — an infallible test of a man of genius.

I hear that Mr. Babington Macauley is to be returned. If he speak half as well as he writes, the House will be in fashion again. I fear that he is one of those who, like the individual whom he has most studied, will "give up to party what was meant for mankind."

At any rate, he must get rid of his rabidity. He writes now on all subjects, as if he certainly intended to be a renegade, and was determined to make the contrast complete.

Mr. Peel is the model of a minister, and improves as a speaker; though, like most of the rest, he is fluent without the least style. He should not get so often in a passion either, or, if he do, should not get out of one so easily. His sweet apologies are cloying. His candour ——he will do well to get rid of that. He can make a present of it to Mr. Huskisson.

Mr. Huskisson is a memorable instance of the value of knowledge, which maintains a man under all circumstances and all disadvantages, and will. I am not sure now, if I were

king, which, thank God! I am not, because I should then be prevented from being the most dutiful of subjects, which, thank God! I am.—I am not sure, I say, if I were his most gracious Majesty, and the present cabinet could not go on, I am not sure that I should not send for Mr. Huskisson.

"Huskisson!" I should say, "the Duke, can whip it on no longer. If you like to try, you may. But, hark ye! no more coalitions, and no more explanations. I have no idea of the first estate of the realm having again to do the duty of the two others. If you have a party strong enough, you shall have a fair trial. You need not speak at present. Luncheon is in the next room. When you have taken a bottle of hock, we shall get a little truth out of you."

In the Lords, I admire the Duke. The readiness with which he has adopted the air of a debater, shows the man of genius. There is a gruff, husky sort of a downright Montaignish *naïveté* about him, which is quaint, unusual,

and tells. You plainly perceive that he is determined to be a civilian; and he is as offended if you drop a hint that he occasionally wears an uniform, as a servant on a holiday if you mention the word *livery*.

Lord Grey speaks with feeling, and is better to hear than to read, though ever strong and impressive. Lord Holland's speeches are like a *refaccimento* of all the suppressed passages in Clarendon, and the notes in the new edition of Bishop Burnet's Memoirs: but taste throws a delicate hue over the curious medley, and the candour of a philosophic mind shows, that in the library of Holland House he can sometimes cease to be a partisan.

Lord Goderich speaks too often, and not sufficiently to the purpose; but he is a man of talents. These Canningites sadly want a leader, and are scattered about in a very loose style indeed. I think I must come over. It would take a month though, I should think, to knock up the present administration, provided it were

February, and not Leap-year. But then I must be consistent, and not compromise my principles, which will never do in England — more than once a-year. Let me see: what are they? Am I a Whig or a Tory? I forget. As for the Tories, I admire antiquity, particularly a ruin; even the relics of the Temple of Intolerance have a charm. I think I am a Tory. But then the Whigs give such good dinners, and are the most amusing. I think I am a Whig; but then the Tories are so moral, and morality is my forte: I must be a Tory. But the Whigs dress so much better; and an ill-dressed party, like an ill-dressed man, must be wrong. Yes! I am a decided Whig. And yet —— I feel like Garrick between Tragedy and Comedy. I think I will be a Whig and Tory alternate nights, and then both will be pleased: or I have no objection, according to the fashion of the day, to take a place under a Tory ministry, provided I may vote against them.

One thing is quite clear,—that a man may speak very well in the House of Commons, and fail very completely in the House of Lords. There are two distinct styles requisite: I intend, in the course of my career, if I have time, to give a specimen of both. In the lower House, Don Juan may perhaps be our model; in the upper House, Paradise Lost.

CHAPTER VII.

Nothing was talked of in Yorkshire but Mr. Arundel Dacre's speech. All the world flocked to Castle Dacre, to compliment and to congratulate; and an universal hope was expressed, that he might come in for the county, if indeed the success of his eloquence did not enable his uncle to pre-occupy that honour. Even the calm Mr. Dacre shared the general elation, and told the Duke of St. James regularly every day, that it was all owing to him. May Dacre was enthusiastic; but her gratitude to him was synonymous with her love for Arundel, and valued accordingly. The Duke, however, felt that he had acted at once magnani-

mously, generously, and wisely. The consciousness of a noble action is itself ennobling. His spirit expanded with the exciting effects which his conduct had produced; and he felt consolation under all his misery, from the conviction that he had now claims to be remembered, and perhaps regarded, when he was no more among them.

The Bill went swimmingly through the Commons, the majority of two gradually swelling into eleven; and the important night in the Lords was at hand.

"Lord Faulconcourt writes," said Mr. Dacre, "that they expect only thirty-eight against us."

"Ah! that terrible House of Lords!" said May Dacre. "Let us see: when does it come on—the day after to-morrow? Scarcely forty-eight hours and all will be over, and we shall be just where we were.—You and your friends manage very badly in your House," she added, addressing herself to the Duke.

"I do all I can," said his Grace, smiling: "Burlington has my proxy."

"That is exactly what I complain of. On such an occasion, there should be no proxies. Personal attendance would indicate a keener interest in the result. Ah! if I were Duke of St. James for one night!"

"Ah! that you would be Duchess of St. James!" thought the Duke; but a despairing lover has no heart for jokes, and so he did not give utterance to the wish. He felt a little agitated, and caught May Dacre's eye. She smiled, and slightly blushed, as if she felt the awkwardness of her remark, though too late.

The Duke retired early, but not to sleep. His mind was busied on a great deed. It was past midnight before he could compose his agitated feelings to repose, and by five o'clock he was again up. He dressed himself, and then put on a rough travelling coat, which, with a shawl, effectually disguised his person; and putting in one pocket a shift, and in the

other a few articles from his dressing-case, the Duke of St. James stole out of Castle Dacre, leaving a note for his host, accounting for his sudden departure by urgent business at Hauteville, and promising a return in a day or two.

The fresh morn had fully broke. He took his hurried way through the long dewy grass, and, crossing the Park, gained the road, which however, was not the high one. He had yet another hour's rapid walk, before he could reach his point of destination; and when that was accomplished, he found himself at a small public house, bearing for a sign his own arms, and situated in the high road opposite his own Park. He was confident that his person was unknown to the host, or to any of the early idlers who were lingering about the mail, then breakfasting.

" Any room, guard, to London ?"

" Room inside, Sir,—just going off."

The door was opened, and the Duke of St

James took his seat in the Edinburgh and York Mail. He had two companions: the first, because apparently the most important, was a hard-featured, grey-headed gentleman, with a somewhat supercilious look, and a mingled air of acuteness and conceit; the other was a humble-looking widow in her weeds, middle-aged, and sad. These persons had recently roused themselves from their nocturnal slumbers, and now, after their welcome meal and hurried toilette, looked as fresh as birds.

"Well! now we are off," said the gentleman. "Very neat, cleanly little house this, Ma'am," continued he to his companion. "What is the sign?"—"The Hauteville arms."—"Oh! Hauteville — that is — that is — let me see! — the St. James family. Ah! a pretty fool that young man has made himself, by all accounts—Eh! Sir?"

"I have reason to believe so," said the Duke.

"I suppose this is his Park — eh? Hem! going to London, Sir?"

"I am."

"Ah! hem! Hauteville Park, I suppose, this. Fine ground wasted. What the use of Parks is, I can't say."

"The place seems well kept up," said the widow.

"So much the worse — I wish it were in ruins."

"Well, for my part," continued the widow in a low voice, "I think a Park nearly the most beautiful thing we have. Foreigners, you know, Sir———"

"Ah! I know what you are going to say," observed the gentleman in a curt, gruffish voice. "It is all nonsense. Foreigners are fools. Don't talk to me of beauty — a mere word. What is the use of all this? It produces about as much benefit to society, as its owner does."

"And do you think his existence, then, perfectly useless?" asked the Duke.

"To be sure, I do. So the world will, some

day or other. We are opening our eyes fast. Men begin to ask themselves what the use of an aristocracy is? That is the test, Sir."

"I think it not very difficult to demonstrate the use of an aristocracy," mildly observed the Duke.

"Pooh! nonsense, Sir! I know what you are going to say; but we have got beyond all that. Have you read this, Sir? This article on the aristocracy in 'The Screw and Lever Review?'"

"I have not, Sir."

"Then I advise you to make yourself master of it, and you will talk no more of the aristocracy. A few more articles like this, and a few more noblemen like the man who has got this Park, and people will open their eyes at last."

"I should think," said his Grace, "that the follies of the man who has got this Park have been productive of evil only to himself. In fact, Sir, according to your own system, a prodigal noble seems to be a very desirable mem-

ber of the commonwealth, and a complete leveller."

"We shall get rid of them all soon, Sir," said his companion, with a malignant smile.

"I have heard that he is very young, Sir," remarked the widow.

"What is that to you or me?"

"Ah! youth is a very trying time. Let us hope the best! He may turn out well yet, poor soul!"

"I hope not. Don't talk to me of poor souls. There is a poor soul," said the utilitarian, pointing to an old man breaking stones on the highway. "That is what I call a poor soul, not a young prodigal, whose life has been one long career of infamous debauchery."

"You appear to have heard much of this young nobleman," said the Duke; "but it does not follow, Sir, that you have heard truth."

"Very true, Sir," said the widow. "The world is very foul-mouthed. Let us hope he is not so very bad."

"I tell you what, my friends; you know nothing about what you are talking. I don't speak without foundation. You have not the least idea, Sir, how this fellow has lived. Now what I am going to tell you is a fact: I know it to be a fact. A very intimate friend of mine, who is an intimate friend of a friend, who knows a person, who is a very intimate friend of an intimate friend of a person, who knows the Duke of St. James, told me himself, that one night they had for supper——what do you think, ma'am?—Venison cutlets, each served up in a hundred pound note, and sovereign sauce."

"Mercy!" exclaimed the widow.

"And do you believe it?" asked the Duke.

"Believe it! I know it!"

"He is very young," said the widow. "Youth is a very trying time."

"Nothing to do with his youth. It's the system, — the infernal system. If that man had to work for his bread, like every body else, do you think he would dine off bank

notes? No! to be sure, he wouldn't! It's the system."

"Young people are very wild!" said the widow.

"Pooh! Ma'am, nonsense! Don't talk cant. If a man be properly educated, he is as capable at one-and-twenty of managing any thing, as at any time in his life: more capable. Look at the men who write 'The Screw and Lever'— the first men in the country. Look at them. Not one of age. Look at the man who wrote this article on the aristocracy — young Duncan Macmorrogh. Look at him, I say, — the first man in the country by far."

"I never heard his name before," calmly observed the Duke.

"Not heard his name?—not heard of young Duncan Macmorrogh—first man of the day; by far, — not heard of him? Go and ask the Marquess of Sheepshead, what he thinks of him. Go and ask Lord Two and Two, what

he thinks of him. Duncan dines with Lord Two and Two every week."

The Duke smiled, and his companion proceeded.

"Well again, look at his friends. There is young First Principles. What a head that fellow has got! Here, this article on India is by him. He'll knock up their Charter. He is a clerk in the India House. Up to the detail, you see. Let me read you this passage on monopolies. Then there is young Tribonian Quirk. By G—, what a mind that fellow has got! By G—, nothing but first principles will go down with these fellows! They laugh at any thing else. By G—, Sir, they look upon the administration of the present day as a parcel of sucking babes! When I was last in town, Quirk told me, that he would not give *that* for all the public men that ever existed! He is keeping his terms at Gray's Inn. This article on a new Code is by him. Shows as plain as light, that by sticking close to first principles,

the laws of the country might be carried in every man's waistcoat-pocket."

The coach stopped, and a colloquy ensued.

"Any room to Selby?"

"Outside or in?"

"Out, to be sure."

"Room inside only."

"Well! in then."

The door opened, and a singularly quaint-looking personage presented himself. He was very stiff and prim in his appearance; dressed in a blue coat, and scarlet waistcoat, with a rich bandana handkerchief tied very neatly round his neck, and a very new hat, to which his head seemed little habituated.

"Sorry to disturb you, ladies and gentlemen; not exactly the proper place for me. Don't be alarmed. I'm always respectful wherever I am. My rule through life is to be respectful."

"Well, now, in with you," said the guard.

"Be respectful, my friend, and don't talk

so to an old soldier who has served his king and his country."

Off they went.

"Majesty's service?" asked the stranger of the Duke.

"I have not that honour."

"Hum! Lawyer, perhaps?"

"Not a lawyer."

"Hum! A gentleman, I suppose?"

The Duke was silent; and so the stranger addressed himself to the anti-aristocrat, who seemed vastly annoyed by the intrusion of so low a personage.

"Going to London, Sir?"

"I tell you what, my friend, at once. I never answer impertinent questions."

"No offence, I hope, Sir! Sorry to offend. I'm always respectful. Madam! I hope I don't inconvenience you; I should be sorry to do that. We sailors, you know, are always ready to accommodate the ladies."

"Sailor!" exclaimed the acute utilitarian,

his curiosity stifling his hauteur. "Why! just now, I thought you were a soldier."

"Well! so I am."

"Well, my friend, you are a conjuror then."

"No, I aynt; I'm a marine."

"A very useless person, then."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean to say, that if the sailors were properly educated, such an amphibious corps would never have been formed, and some of the most atrocious sinecures ever tolerated, would consequently not have existed."

"Sinecures! I never heard of him. I served under Lord Combermere. Maybe you have heard of him, Ma'am? A nice man, — a beautiful man. I have seen him stand in a field like that, with the shot falling about him like hail, and caring no more for them than peas."

"If that were for bravado," said the utilitarian, "I think it a very silly thing."

"Bravado! I never heard of him. It was for his king and country."

"Was it in India?" asked the widow.

"In a manner, Ma'am," said the Marine, very courteously. "At Bhurtpore, up by Pershy, and thereabouts — the lake of Cashmere, where all the shawls come from. May-be you have heard of Cashmere, Ma'am?"

"Who has not heard of the lake of Cashmere!" hummed the Duke to himself.

"Ah! I thought so," said the Marine; "all people know much the same; for some have seen, and some have read. I can't read, but I have served my king and country for five-and-twenty years, and have used my eyes."

"Better than reading," said the Duke, humouring the character.

"I'll tell you what," said the Marine, with a knowing look. "I suspect there is a d—d lot of lies in your books. I landed in England last 7th of June, and went to see St. Paul's. 'This is the greatest building in the world,'

says the man. Thinks I, 'You lie.' I did not tell him so, because I am always respectful. I tell you what, Sir; maybe you think St. Paul's the greatest building in the world, but I tell you what, it's a lie. I have seen one greater. Maybe, Ma'am, you think I am telling you a lie too; but I am not. Go and ask Captain Jones, of the 58th: I went with him: I give you his name: go and ask Captain Jones of the 58th, if I be telling you a lie. The building I mean is the palace of the Sultan Acber; for I have served my king and country five-and-twenty years last seventh of June, and have seen strange things—all built of precious stones, Ma'am. What do you think of that? All built of precious stones: cornelian, of which you make your seals: as sure as I'm a sinner saved. If I aynt speaking the truth, I am not going to Selby. Maybe you'd like to know why I am going to Selby. I'll tell you what. Five-and-twenty years have I served my king and country last seventh of June. Now I will begin with the beginning.

I ran away from home, when I was eighteen, you see; and after the siege of Bhurtpore, I was sitting on a bale of silk alone, and I said to myself, I'll go and see my mother. Sure as I am going to Selby, that's the whole. I landed in England last seventh of June, absent five-and-twenty years, serving my king and country. I sent them a letter last night. I put it in the post myself. Maybe I shall be there before my letter now."

"To be sure you will," said the utilitarian: "what made you do such a silly thing? Why, your letter is in this coach."

"Well! I shouldn't wonder. I shall be there before my letter now. All nonsense, letters: my wife wrote it at Falmouth."

"You are married, then?" said the widow.

"Aynt I, though?—the sweetest cretur, Madam, though I say it before you, that ever lived."

"Why did not you bring your wife with you?" asked the widow.

"And wouldn't I be very glad to? but she

wouldn't come among strangers at once; and so I have got a letter, which she wrote for me, to put in the post, in case they are glad to see me, and then she will come on."

"And you, I suppose, are not sorry to have a holiday?" said the Duke.

"Aynt I, though? Aynt I as low about leaving her, as ever I was in my life; and so is the poor cretur. She won't eat a bit of victuals till I come back, I'll be sworn,—not a bit, I'll be bound to say that — and I myself, although I am an old soldier, and served my king and country for five-and-twenty years, and so got knocked about, and used to any thing, as it were—I don't know how it is, but I always feel queer whenever I am away from her. I shan't make a hearty meal till I see her. Somehow or other, when I am away from her, everything feels dry in the throat."

"You are very fond of her, I see?" said the Duke.

"And ought I not to be? Didn't I ask

her three times before she said *yes?* Those are the wives for wear, Sir. None of the fruit that fall at a shaking for me! Hasn't she stuck by me in every climate, and in every land I was in? Not a fellow in the company had such a wife. Wouldn't I throw myself off this coach this moment, to give her a moment's peace? That I would though, — d—n me if I wouldn't."

"Hush! hush!" said the widow; "never swear. — I am afraid you talk too much of your love," she added with a faint smile.

"Ah! you don't know my wife, Ma'am.— Are you married, Sir?"

"I have not that happiness," said the Duke.

"Well! there is nothing like it! but don't take the fruit that falls at a shake. But this, I suppose, is Selby."

The Marine took his departure, having stayed long enough to raise in the young Duke's mind curious feelings.

As he was plunged in reverie, and as the

widow was silent, conversation was not resumed until the coach stopped for dinner.

"We stop here half an hour, Gentlemen," said the guard. "Mrs. Burnet," he continued, to the widow, "let me hand you out."

They entered the parlour of the Inn. The Duke, who was ignorant of the etiquette of the road, did not proceed to the discharge of his duties, as the youngest guest, with all the promptness desired by his fellow-travellers.

"Now, Sir," said an outside, "I will thank you for a slice of that mutton, and will join you, if you have no objection, in a bottle of Sherry."

"What you please, Sir. May I have the pleasure of helping you, Ma'am?"

After dinner, the Duke took advantage of a vacant outside place.

Tom Rawlins was the model of a Guard. Young, robust, and gay, he had a letter, a word, or a wink for all he met. All seasons were the same to him: night or day, he was ever awake, and ever alive to all the interest

of the road: now joining in conversation with a passenger, shrewd, sensible, and respectful; now exchanging a little elegant *badinage* with the coachman; now bowing to a pretty girl; now quizzing a passer-by:—he was off and on his seat in an instant; and, in the whiff of his cigar, would lock a wheel, or unlock a passenger.

From him, the young Duke learned that his fellow-inside was Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh, senior, a writer at Edinburgh, and, of course, the father of the first man of the day. Tom Rawlins could not tell his Grace as much about the principal writer in "The Screw and Lever Review" as we can; for Tom was no patron of our periodical literature, farther than a police report in the Publican's Journal. Young Duncan Macmorrogh was a limb of the law, who had just brought himself into notice by a series of articles in "The Screw and Lever," in which he had subjected the Universe piecemeal to his critical analysis. Duncan Macmorrogh cut up the Creation, and got a name. His attack upon

Mountains was most violent, and proved, by its personality, that he had come from the Lowlands. He demonstrated the inutility of all elevation, and declared that the Andes were the aristocracy of the globe. Rivers he rather patronized; but flowers he quite pulled to pieces, and proved them to be the most useless of existences. Duncan Macmorrogh informed us, that we were quite wrong in supposing ourselves to be the miracle of the creation. On the contrary, he avowed that already there were various pieces of machinery of far more importance than man; and he had no doubt, in time, that a superior race would arise, got by a steam-engine on a spinning-jenny.

The other "inside" was the widow of a former curate of a Northumbrian village. Some friend had obtained for her only child a clerkship in a public office, and, for some time, this idol of her heart had gone on prospering; but unfortunately, of late, Charles Burnet had got 'into a bad set,' was now involved in a terrible

scrape, and, as Tom Rawlins feared, must lose his situation and go to ruin.

"She was half distracted when she heard it first, poor creature! I have known her all my life, Sir. Many the kind word and glass of ale I have had at her house, and that's what makes me feel for her, you see. I do what I can to make the journey easy to her, for it is a pull at her years. God bless her! there is not a better body in this world; that I will say for her. When I was a boy, I used to be the playfellow in a manner with Charley Burnet, a gay lad, Sir, as ever you'd wish to see in a summer's day, — and the devil among the girls always, and that's been the ruin of him; and as open-a-hearted fellow as ever lived. Damn me! I'd walk to the land's end to save him, if it were only for his mother's sake, — to say nothing of himself."

"And can nothing be done?" asked the Duke.

"Why, you see, he is back in *£. s. d.*; and,

to make it up, the poor body must sell her all, and he won't let her do it, and wrote a letter like a prince,—(No room, Sir,)—as fine a letter as ever you read—(Hilloa, there! What! are you asleep?)—as ever you read on a summer's day. I didn't see it, but my mother told me it was as good as e'er a one of the old gentleman's sermons. 'Mother,' said he, 'my sins be upon my own head. I can bear disgrace,'—(How do, Mr. Wilkins?)—'but I cannot bear to see you a beggar!'"

"Poor fellow!"

"Ay! Sir, as good-a-hearted fellow as ever you'd wish to meet!"

"Is he involved to a great extent, think you?"

"Oh! a long figure, Sir,—(I say, Betty, I've got a letter for you from your sweetheart,)—a very long figure, Sir—(Here, take it!)—I should be sorry—(Don't blush—no message?)—I should be sorry to take two hundred pounds to pay it. No, I wouldn't take two hundred pounds,

that I wouldn't! — (I say, Jacob, stop at old Bag Smith's)."

Night came on, and the Duke resumed his inside place. Mr. Macmorrogh went to sleep over his son's article; and the Duke feigned slumber, though he was only indulging in reverie. He opened his eyes, and a light, which they passed, revealed the countenance of the widow. Tears were stealing down her face.

"I have no mother—I have no one to weep for me," thought the Duke; "and yet, if I had been in this youth's station, my career probably would have been as fatal. Let me assist her. Alas! how I have misused my power, when, even to do this slight deed, I am obliged to hesitate, and consider whether it be practicable."

The coach again stopped for a quarter of an hour. The Duke had, in consideration of the indefinite period of his visit, supplied himself amply with money on repairing to Dacre. Besides his purse, which was well stored for the

road, he had somewhat more than three hundred pounds in his note-book. He took advantage of their tarrying, to inclose it, and its contents, in a sheet of paper, with these lines—

"An unknown friend requests Mrs. Burnet to accept this token of his sympathy with suffering virtue."

Determined to find some means to put this in her possession before their parting, he resumed his place. The Scotchman now prepared for his night's repose. He produced a pillow for his back, a bag for his feet, and a cap for his head. These, and a glass of brandy and water, in time produced a due effect, and he was soon fast asleep. Even to the widow, night brought some solace. The Duke alone found no repose. Unused to travelling in public conveyances at night, and unprovided with any of the ingenious expedients of a mail-coach adventurer, he felt all the inconveniences of an inexperienced traveller. The seat was unendurably hard, his back ached, his head whirled, the

confounded sherry, slight as was his portion, had made him feverish, and he felt at once excited and exhausted. He was sad, too,—very depressed. Alone, and no longer surrounded with that splendour which had hitherto made solitude precious, life seemed stripped of all its ennobling spirit. His energy vanished. He repented his rashness; and the impulse of the previous night, which had gathered fresh power from the dewy moon, vanished. He felt alone, and without a friend, and night passed without a moment's slumber, watching the driving clouds.

The last fifteen miles seemed longer than the whole journey. At St. Alban's he got out, took a cup of coffee with Tom Rawlins, and, although the morning was raw, again seated himself by his side. In the first gloomy little suburb Mrs. Burnet got out. The Duke sent Rawlins after her with the parcel, with peremptory instructions to leave it. He watched the widow protesting it was not her's, his faithful emissary

appealing to the direction, and, with delight, he observed it left in her hands. They rattled into London, stopped in Lombard Street, reached Holborn, entered an archway; the coachman threw the whip and reins from his now careless hands. The Duke bade farewell to Tom Rawlins, and was shown to a bed.

CHAPTER VIII.

The return of morning had in some degree dissipated the gloom that had settled on the young Duke during the night. Sound and light made him feel less forlorn, and for a moment his soul again responded to his high purpose. But now he was to seek necessary repose. In vain. His heated frame and anxious mind were alike restless. He turned, he tossed in his bed, but he could not banish from his ear the whirling sound of his late conveyance, the snore of Mr. Macmorrogh, and the voice of Tom Rawlins. He kept dwelling on every petty incident of his journey, and repeating in his mind every petty saying. His determina-

tion to slumber made him even less sleepy. Conscious that repose was absolutely necessary to the performance of his task, and dreading that the boon was now unattainable, he became each moment more feverish and more nervous; a crowd of half-formed ideas and images flitted over his heated brain. Failure, misery, May Dacre, Tom Rawlins, boiled beef, Mrs. Burnet, the aristocracy, mountains and the marine, and the tower of St. Alban's cathedral, hurried along in infinite confusion. But there is nothing like experience. In a state of distraction, he remembered the hopeless but refreshing sleep he had gained after his fatal adventure at Brighton. He jumped out of bed, and threw himself on the floor, and in a few minutes, from the same cause, his excited senses subsided into slumber.

He woke: the sun was shining through his rough shutter. It was noon. He jumped up, rang the bell, and asked for a bath. The chambermaid did not seem exactly to comprehend

his meaning, but said she would speak to the waiter. He was the first gentleman who ever had asked for a bath at the Dragon with Two Tails. The waiter informed him that he might get a bath, he believed, at the Hummums. The Duke dressed, and to the Hummums he then took his way. As he was leaving the yard, he was followed by an ostler, who, in a voice musically hoarse, thus addressed him.

"Have you seen Mississ, Sir?"

"Do you mean me? No, I have not seen your Mississ;" and the Duke proceeded.

"Sir, Sir," said the ostler, running after him, "I think you said you had not seen Mississ?"

"You think right," said the Duke, astonished; and again he walked on.

"Sir, Sir," said the pursuing ostler; "I don't think you have got any luggage?"

"Oh! I beg your pardon," said the Duke; "I see it. I am in your debt; but I meant to return."

"No doubt on't, Sir; but when gemmen

don't have no luggage, they sees Mississ before they go, Sir."

"Well, what am I in your debt? I can pay you here."

"Five shillings, Sir."

"Here!" said the Duke; "and tell me when a coach leaves this place to-morrow for Yorkshire."

"Half-past six o'clock in the morning precisely," said the ostler.

"Well, my good fellow, I depend upon your securing me a place; and that is for yourself," added his Grace, throwing him a sovereign. "Now, mind; I depend upon you."

The man stared, as if he had been suddenly taken into partnership with Mississ; at length, he found his tongue.

"Your honour may depend upon me. Where would you like to sit? In or out? Back to your horses, or the front? Get you the box, if you like. Where's your great coat, Sir? I'll brush it for you."

The bath and the breakfast brought our hero round a good deal, and at half-past two he stole to a solitary part of St. James's Park, to stretch his legs and collect his senses. We must now let our readers into a secret, which perhaps they have already unravelled. The Duke had rushed up to London, with the determination, not only of attending the debate, but of participating in it. His Grace was no politician; but the question at issue was one simple in its nature, and so domestic in its spirit, that few men could have arrived at his period of life without having heard its merits, both too often and too amply discussed. He was master of all the points of interest, and he had sufficient confidence in himself to believe that he could do them justice. He walked up and down, conning over in his mind, not only the remarks which he intended to make, but the very language in which he meant to offer them. As he formed sentences, almost for the first time, his courage and his fancy alike warmed: his san-

guine spirit sympathized with the nobility of the imaginary scene, and inspirited the intonations of his modulated voice.

About four o'clock he repaired to the House. Walking up one of the passages, his progress was stopped by the back of an individual bowing with great servility to a patronizing Peer, and My-Lording him with painful repetition. The nobleman was Lord Fitz-pompey; the bowing gentleman, Mr. Duncan Macmorrogh, the anti-aristocrat, and father of the first man of the day.

"George! is it possible!" exclaimed Lord Fitz-pompey. "I will speak to you in the House," said the Duke, passing on, and bowing to Mr. Donald Macmorrogh.

He recalled his proxy from the Duke of Burlington, and accounted for his presence to many astonished friends by being on his way to the Continent: and, passing through London, thought he might as well be present, particularly as he was about to reside for some time

in Catholic countries. It was the last compliment that he could pay his future hosts. "Give me a pinch of snuff."

The debate began. Don't be alarmed. I shall not describe it. Five or six Peers had spoken, and one of the Ministers had just sat down when the Duke of St. James rose. He was extremely nervous, but he repeated to himself the name of May Dacre for the hundredth time, and proceeded. He was nearly commencing "May Dacre," instead of "My Lords," but he escaped this blunder. For the first five or ten minutes, he spoke in almost as cold and lifeless a style, as when he echoed the King's speech; but he was young, and seldom troubled them, and was listened to therefore with indulgence. The Duke warmed, and a courteous "hear, hear," frequently sounded; the Duke became totally free from embarrassment, and spoke with equal eloquence and energy. A cheer, a stranger in the House of Lords, rewarded and encouraged him. As an Irish landlord, his sin-

cerity could not be disbelieved, when he expressed his conviction of the safety of emancipation; but it was as an English proprietor and British noble, that it was evident that his Grace felt most keenly upon this important measure. He described with power the peculiar injustice of the situation of the English Catholics. He professed to feel keenly upon this subject, because his native county had made him well acquainted with the temper of this class; he painted in glowing terms, the loyalty, the wealth, the influence, the noble virtues, of his Catholic neighbours; and he closed a speech of an hour's duration, in which he had shown, that a worn subject was susceptible of novel treatment, and novel interest, amid loud and general cheers. The Lords gathered round him while he spoke, and many personally congratulated him upon his distinguished success. The debate took its course. At three o'clock, the Pro-Catholics found themselves in a minority, but a minority in which

the prescient might have well discovered the herald of future justice. The address of the Duke of St. James was the *crack* speech of the night.

The Duke walked into White's. It was crowded. The first man who welcomed him was Annesley. He congratulated the Duke with a warmth for which the world did not give him credit.

"I assure you, my dear St. James, that I am one of the few people whom this display has not surprised. I have long observed that you were formed for something better than mere frivolity. And, between ourselves, I am sick of it. Don't be surprised if you hear that I go to Algiers. Depend upon it, that I am on the point of doing something dreadful."

"Sup with me, St. James," said Lord Squib; "I will ask O'Connell to meet you."

Lord Fitz-pompey and Lord Darrell were profuse in congratulations; but he broke away from them, to welcome the man who now ad-

vanced. He was one of whom he never thought without a shudder, but whom, for all that, he greatly liked.

"My dear Duke of St. James," said Arundel Dacre, "how ashamed I am that this is the first time I have personally thanked you for all your goodness!"

"My dear Dacre, I have to thank you for proving for the first time to the world, that I was not without discrimination."

"No, no," said Dacre gaily and easily; "all the congratulations, and all the compliments to-night shall be for you. Believe me, my dear friend, I share your triumph."

They shook hands with earnestness.

"May will read your speech with exultation," said Arundel. "I think we must thank her for making you an orator."

The Duke faintly smiled, and shook his head.

"And how are all our Yorkshire friends?" continued Arundel. "I am disappointed again

in getting down to them; but I hope, in the course of the month, to pay them a visit."

"I shall see them in a day or two," said the Duke. "I pay Mr. Dacre one more visit before my departure from England."

"Are you then indeed going?" asked Arundel in a kind voice.

"For ever."

"Nay, nay, *ever* is a strong word."

"It becomes then my feelings. However, we will not talk of this. Can I bear any letter for you?"

"I have just written," replied Arundel in a gloomy voice, and with a changing countenance, "and therefore will not trouble you. And yet—"

"What?"

"And yet the letter is an important letter—to me. The post, to be sure, never does miss.—but if it were not troubling your Grace too much, I almost would ask you to be its bearer."

"It will be there as soon," said the Duke, "for I shall be off in an hour."

"I will take it out of the box then," said Arundel, and he fetched it. "Here is the letter," said he on his return: "pardon me if I impress upon you its importance. Excuse this emotion,—but, indeed, this letter decides my fate. My happiness for life is dependent on its reception!"

He spoke with an air and voice of agitation.

The Duke received the letter in a manner scarcely less disturbed; and with a hope that they might meet before his departure, faintly murmured by one party, and scarcely responded to by the other, they parted.

"Well, now," said the Duke, "the farce is complete:—and I have come to London to be the bearer of his offered heart! I like this, now. Is there a more contemptible—a more ludicrous—absolutely ludicrous ass than myself? Fear not for its delivery: most religiously shall it be consigned to the hand of its

owner. The fellow has paid a compliment to my honour or my simplicity: I fear the last,—and really I feel rather proud. But, away with these feelings! Have not I seen her in his arms? Pah, pah, pah! Thank God! I spoke. At least, I die in a blaze. Even Annesley does not think me quite a fool. Oh, May Dacre, May Dacre!—if you were but mine, I should be the happiest fellow that ever breathed!"

He breakfasted, and then took his way to the Dragon with Two Tails. The morning was bright, and fresh, and beautiful, even in London. Joy came upon his heart, in spite of all his loneliness, and he was glad and sanguine. He arrived just in time. The coach was about to start. The faithful ostler was there with his great-coat, and the Duke found that he had three fellow-passengers. They were lawyers, and talked for the first two hours of nothing but the case respecting which they were going down into the country. At Woburn, a despatch arrived with the newspapers. All purchased

one, and the Duke among the rest. He was well reported, and could now sympathize with, instead of smile at, the anxiety of Lord Darrell.

"The young Duke of St. James seems to have distinguished himself very much," said the first lawyer.

"So I observe," said the second one. "The leading article calls our attention to his speech as the most brilliant delivered."

"I am surprised," said the third; "I thought he was quite a different sort of person."

"By no means," said the first: "I have always had a very high opinion of him. I am not one of those who think the worse of a young man because he is a little wild."

"Nor I," said the second. "Young blood, you know, is young blood."

"A very intimate friend of mine, who knows the Duke of St. James well, once told me," rejoined the first, "that I was quite mistaken about him; that he was a person of no common talents, well read, quite a man of the world, and a good

deal of wit too; and let me tell you that in these days wit is no common thing."

"Certainly not," said the third. "We have no wit now."

"And a very kind-hearted, generous fellow," continued the first, "and *very* unaffected."

"I can't bear an affected man," said the second, without looking off his paper. "He seems to have made a very fine speech indeed."

"I should not wonder his turning out something great," said the third.

"I have no doubt of it," said the second. "Many of these wild fellows do."

"He is not so wild as we think," said the first.

"But he is done up," said the second.

"Is he indeed?" said the third. "Perhaps by making a speech, he wants a place?"

"People don't make speeches for nothing," said the third.

"I shouldn't wonder if he is after a place in the Household," said the second.

"Depend upon it, he looks to something more active," said the first.

"Perhaps he would like to be head of the Admiralty?" said the second.

"Or the Treasury?" said the third.

"That is impossible!" said the first. "He is too young."

"He is as old as Pitt," said the third.

"I hope he will resemble him in nothing but his age then," said the first.

"I look upon Pitt as the first man that ever lived," said the third.

"What!" said the first. "The man who worked up the National Debt to nearly eight hundred millions!"

"What of that?" said the third. "I look upon the National Debt as the source of all our prosperity."

"The source of all our taxes, you mean."

"What is the harm of taxes?"

"The harm is, that you will soon have no trade; and when you have no trade, you will

have no duties; and when you have no duties, you will have no dividends; and when you have no dividends, you will have no law; and then, where is your source of prosperity?" said the first.

But here the coach stopped, and the Duke got out for an hour.

By midnight they had reached a town not more than thirty miles from Dacre. The Duke was quite exhausted, and determined to stop. In half an hour he enjoyed that deep, dreamless slumber, with which no luxury can compete. One must have passed restless nights for years, to be able to appreciate the value of sound sleep.

CHAPTER IX.

He rose early, and managed to reach Dacre at the breakfast hour of the family. He discharged his chaise at the Park gate, and entered the house unseen. He took his way along a corridor lined with plants, which led to the small and favourite room in which the morning meetings of May and himself always took place when they were alone. As he lightly stepped along, he heard a voice that he could not mistake, as it were in animated converse. Agitated by sounds which ever created in him emotion, for a moment he paused. He starts,—his eye sparkles with strange delight,—a flush comes over his panting features, half of modesty, half of triumph. He listens to his

own speech from the lips of the woman he loves. She is reading to her father with melodious energy the passage in which he describes the high qualities of his Catholic neighbours. The intonations of the voice indicate the deep sympathy of the reader. She ceases. He hears the admiring exclamation of his host. He rallies his strength,—he advances,—he stands before them. She utters almost a shriek of delightful surprise, and welcomes him with both her hands.

How much there was to say!—how much to ask!—how much to answer! Even Mr. Dacre poured forth questions like a boy. But May——she could not speak, but leant forward in her chair with an eager ear, and a look of congratulation, that rewarded him for all his exertion. Every thing was to be told. How he went;—whether he slept in the mail;—where he went;—what he did;—whom he saw;—what they said;—what they thought;———all must be answered. Then fresh exclamations of won-

der, delight, and triumph. The Duke forgot every thing but his love, and for three hours felt the happiest of men.

At length Mr. Dacre rose and looked at his watch with a shaking head. "I have a most important appointment," said he, "and I must gallop to keep it. God bless you, my dear St. James! I could stay talking with you for ever; but you must be utterly wearied. Now, my dear boy, go to bed."

"To bed!" exclaimed the Duke. "Why, Tom Rawlins would laugh at you!"

"And who is Tom Rawlins?"

"Ah! I cannot tell you every thing; but assuredly I am not going to bed."

"Well, May, I leave him to your care; but do not let him talk any more."

"Oh! Sir," said the Duke, "I really had forgotten. I am the bearer to you, Sir, of a letter from Mr. Arundel Dacre." He gave it him.

As Mr. Dacre read the communication, his

countenance changed, and the smile which before was on his face, vanished. But whether he were displeased, or only serious, it was impossible to ascertain, although the Duke watched him narrowly. At length he said, "May! here is a letter from Arundel, in which you are much interested."

"Give it me, then, Papa!"

"No, my love; we must speak of this together. But I am pressed for time. When I come home. Remember!" He quitted the room.

They were alone: the Duke began again talking, and Miss Dacre put her finger to her mouth, with a smile.

"I assure you," said he, "I am not half so wearied as the day after hunting. I slept at ——y, and the only thing I now want is a good walk. Let me be your companion this morning!'

"I was thinking of paying Nurse a visit. What say you?"

"Oh! I am ready; any where."

She ran for her bonnet, and he kissed her handkerchief, which she left behind, and, I believe, every thing else in the room which bore the slightest relation to her. And then the recollection of Arundel's letter came over him, and his joy fled. When she returned, he was standing before the fire, gloomy and dull.

"I fear you are tired," she said.

"Not in the least."

"I shall never forgive myself if all this exertion make you ill."

"Why not?"

"Because, although I will not tell Papa, I am sure my nonsense is the cause of your having gone to London."

"It is probable; for you are the cause of all that does not disgrace me." He advanced, and was about to seize her hand; but the accursed miniature occurred to him; and he repressed his feelings, almost with a groan. She, too, had turned away her head, and was busily engaged in tending a flower.

" Because she has explicitly declared her feelings to me, and, sincere in that declaration, honours me by a friendship of which alone I am unworthy, am I to persecute her with my dishonoured overtures—the twice rejected? No, no!" He took up his hat, and offered her his arm.

They took their way through the Park, and he soon succeeded in re-assuming the tone that befitted their situation. Traits of the debate, and the debaters, which newspapers cannot convey, and which he had not yet recounted, — anecdotes of Annesley and their friends, and other gossip, were offered for her amusement. But if she were amused, she was not lively, but singularly, unusually silent. There was only one point on which she seemed interested, and that was his speech. When he was cheered, and who particularly cheered; who gathered round him, and what they said after the debate: on all these points she was most inquisitive.

They rambled on: nurse was quite for-

gotten; and at length they found themselves in the beautiful valley, rendered more lovely by the ruins of the abbey. It was a place that the Duke could never forget, and which he ever avoided. He had never renewed his visit since he first gave vent, among its reverend ruins, to his o'ercharged and most tumultuous heart.

They stood in silence before the holy pile with its vaulting arches and crumbling walls, mellowed by the mild lustre of the declining sun. Not two years had fled since here he first staggered after the breaking glimpses of self-knowledge, and struggled to call order from out the chaos of his mind. Not two years, and yet what a change had come over his existence! How diametrically opposite now were all his thoughts and views, and feelings, to those which then controlled his fatal soul! How capable, as he firmly believed, was he now of discharging his duty to his Creator and his fellow-men! and yet the boon that ought to have been the reward for all this self-contest —

the sweet seal that ought to have ratified this new contract of existence was wanting.

"Ah!" he exclaimed aloud, and in a voice of anguish,—"ah! if I ne'er had left the walls of Dacre, how different might have been my lot!"

A gentle but involuntary pressure reminded him of the companion whom, for once in his life, he had for a moment forgotten.

"I feel it is madness,—I feel it is worse than madness; but must I yield without a struggle, and see my dark fate cover me without an effort? Oh! yes, here, even here, where I have wept over your contempt,—even here, although I subject myself to renewed rejection, let, let me tell you, before we part, how I adore you!"

She was silent; a strange courage came over his spirit; and, with a reckless boldness, and rapid voice, a misty sight, and total unconsciousness of all other existence, he resumed the words which had broken out, as if by inspiration.

" I am not worthy of you. Who is? I was worthless. I did not know it. Have not I struggled to be pure? have not I sighed on my nightly pillow for your blessing? Oh! could you read my heart,—and sometimes, I think, you can read it, for indeed, with all its faults, it is without guile, I dare to hope, that you would pity me. Since we first met, your image has not quitted my conscience for a second. When you thought me least worthy, — when you thought me vile, or mad, — oh! by all that is sacred, I was the most miserable wretch that ever breathed, and flew to dissipation, only for distraction!

" Not, not for a moment have I ceased to think you the best, the most beautiful, the most enchanting and endearing creature that ever graced our earth. Even when I first dared to whisper my insolent affection, believe me, even then, your presence controlled my spirit as no other woman had. I bent to you then in pride and power. The station that I

could then offer you was not utterly unworthy of your perfection. I am now a beggar, or, worse, an insolvent noble, and dare I, dare I to ask you to share the fortunes that are broken, and the existence that is obscure?"

She turned; her arm fell over his shoulder; she buried her head in his breast.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Dacre returned home with an excellent appetite, and almost as keen a desire to renew his conversation with his guest; but dinner and the Duke were neither to be commanded. Miss Dacre also could not be found. No information could be obtained of them from any quarter. It was nearly seven o'clock — the hour of dinner. That meal, somewhat to Mr. Dacre's regret, was postponed for half an hour, servants were sent out, and the bell was rung — but no tidings. Mr. Dacre was a little annoyed and more alarmed; he was also hungry, and at half-past seven he sat down to a solitary meal.

About a quarter past eight, a figure rapped

at the dining-room window: — it was the young Duke. The fat butler seemed astonished, not to say shocked, at this violation of etiquette; nevertheless, he slowly opened the window.

"Any thing the matter, George? Where is May?"

"Nothing. We lost our way. That is all. May—Miss Dacre desired me to say, that she would not join us at dinner.

"I am sure, something has happened."

"I assure you, my dear Sir, nothing, nothing at all the least unpleasant—but we took the wrong turning. All my fault."

"Shall I send for the soup?"

"No. I am not hungry — I will take some wine." So saying, his Grace poured out a tumbler of Claret.

"Shall I take your Grace's hat?" asked the fat butler.

"Dear me! have I my hat on?"

This was not the only evidence afforded by our hero's conduct that his presence of mind

had slightly deserted him. He was soon buried in a deep reverie, and sat with a full plate but idle knife and fork before him,—a perfect puzzle to the fat butler, who had hitherto considered his Grace the very pink of propriety.

"George, you have eaten no dinner," said Mr. Dacre.

"Thank you, a very good one indeed—a remarkably good dinner. Give me some red wine, if you please."

At length they were left alone.

"I have some good news for you, George."

"Indeed!"

"I think I have let Rosemount."

"So!"

"And exactly to the kind of person that you wanted,—a man who will take a pride, although merely a tenant, in not permitting his poor neighbours to feel the *want* of a landlord. You will never guess,—Lord Mildmay!"

"What did you say of Lord Mildmay, Sir?"

"My dear fellow, your wits are wool-gathering — I say, I think I have let Rosemount."

"Oh! I have changed my mind about letting Rosemount."

"My dear Duke, there is no trouble which I will grudge, to further your interests; but really I must beg, in future, that you will, at least, apprize me when you change your mind. There is nothing, as we have both agreed, more desirable than to find an eligible tenant for Rosemount. You never can expect to have a more beneficial one than Lord Mildmay; and really, unless you have positively promised the place to another person, which, excuse me for saying, you were not authorized to do, I must insist, after what has passed, upon his having the preference."

"My dear Sir, I only changed my mind this afternoon: I couldn't tell you before. I have promised it to no one; but I think of living there myself."

"Yourself! Oh! if that be the case, I shall

be quite reconciled to the disappointment of Lord Mildmay. But what, in the name of goodness, my dear fellow, has produced this wonderful revolution in all your plans in the course of a few hours? I thought you were going to mope away life in the Lake of Geneva, or dawdle it away in Florence or Rome."

"It is very odd, Sir. I can hardly believe it myself: — and yet it must be true. I hear her voice even at this moment. Oh! my dear Mr. Dacre, I am the happiest fellow that ever breathed!"

"What is all this?"

"Is it possible, my dear Sir, that you have not long before detected the feelings I ventured to entertain for your daughter? In a word, she requires only your sanction to my being the most fortunate of men."

"My dear friend, — my dear, dear boy!" cried Mr. Dacre, rising from his chair and embracing him, "it is out of the power of man to impart to me any event which could afford me

such exquisite pleasure! Indeed, indeed, it is to me most surprising! for I had been induced to suspect, George, that some explanation had passed between you and May, which, while it accounted for your mutual esteem, gave little hope of a stronger sentiment."

"I believe, Sir," said the young Duke with a smile, "I was obstinate."

"Well, this changes all our plans. I have intended, for this fortnight past, to speak to you finally on your affairs. No better time than the present: and, in the first place——"

But, really, this interview is confidential.

CHAPTER XI.

THEY come not: it is late. He is already telling all! She relapses into her sweet reverie. Her thought fixes on no subject: her mind is intent on no idea: her soul is melted into dreamy delight: her only consciousness is perfect bliss! Sweet sounds still echo in her ear, and still her pure pulse beats, from the first embrace of passion.

The door opens, and her father enters, leaning upon the arm of her beloved. Yes — he has told all! Mr. Dacre approached, and, bending down, pressed the lips of his child. It was the seal to their plighted faith, and told, without speech, that the blessing of a parent

mingled with the vows of a lover! No other intimation was at present necessary: but she, the daughter, thought now only of her father, that friend of her long life, whose love had ne'er been wanting, — was she about to leave him? She arose: she threw her arms around his neck and wept.

The young Duke walked away, that his presence might not control the full expression of her hallowed soul. "This jewel is mine," was his thought: "what, what have I done to be so blessed!"

In a few minutes he again joined them, and was seated by her side; and Mr. Dacre considerately remembered that he wished to see his steward, and they were left alone. Their eyes meet, and their soft looks tell that they were thinking of each other. His arm steals round the back of her chair, and with his other hand he gently captures her's.

First love, first love!— how many a glowing bard has sung thy beauties! How many a

poor devil of a prosing novelist, like myself, has echoed all our superiors, the poets, teach us! No doubt, thou rosy god of young Desire, thou art a most bewitching little demon; and yet, for my part, give me last love.

Ask a man, which turned out best,—the first horse he bought, or the one he now canters on? Ask—but, in short, there is nothing in which knowledge is more important, and experience more valuable, than in love. When we first love, we are enamoured of our own imaginations. Our thoughts are high, our feelings rise from out the deepest caves of the tumultuous tide of our full life. We look around for one to share our exquisite existence, and sanctify the beauties of our being.

But those beauties are only in our thoughts. We feel like heroes, when we are but boys. Yet our mistress must bear a relation, not to ourselves, but to our imagination. She must be a real heroine, while our perfection is but ideal. And the quick and dangerous fancy of

our race will, at first, rise to the pitch. She is all—we can conceive. Mild and pure as youthful priests, we bow down before our altar. But the idol to which we breathe our warm and gushing vows, and bend our eager knees—all its power, does it not exist only in our idea—all its beauty, is it not the creation of our own excited fancy? And then the sweetest of superstitions ends. The long delusion bursts, and we are left like men upon a heath when fairies vanish:—cold and dreary, gloomy, bitter, harsh, existence seems a blunder.

But just when we are most miserable, and curse the poets' cunning and our own conceits, there lights upon our path, just like a ray fresh from the sun, some sparkling child of light, that makes us think we are premature, at least, in our resolves. Yet we are determined not to be taken in, and try her well in all the points in which the others failed. One by one, her charms steal on our warming soul, as, one by one, those of the other beauty sadly stole away,

and then we bless our stars, and feel quite sure that we have found perfection in a petticoat.

What shall I do then? Why, Sir, if you have cash enough, marry; but if not, go to Paris for a month—not Bath or Brighton—you may find her there—and forget her.

For, believe me, who, being a bachelor, may be allowed to put in a word in favour of a system in which I am not interested, Love without marriage is both expensive, immoral, and productive of the most disagreeable consequences. It tries the constitution, heart, and purse. Profligacy is almost an impossibility, and even dissipation, as this work well proves, soon gets a bore. What we call morality, is nothing else but common sense, and the experience of our fellow-men codified for our common good.

And if, if marriage did not require such an income (they say three thousand now will scarcely do, even for us younkers. What times we live in!)—I have half a mind (I think we must come down) really to look about me (one gets tired

of wandering), and no doubt there is great pleasure in a well-regulated existence, particularly if no children come in after dinner.

But our Duke—where are we? He had read woman thoroughly, and consequently knew how to value the virgin pages on which his thoughts now fixed. He and May Dacre wandered in the woods, and nature seemed to them more beautiful from their beautiful loves. They gazed upon the sky; a brighter light fell o'er the luminous earth. Sweeter to them the fragrance of the sweetest flowers, and a more balmy breath brought on the universal promise of the opening year.

They wandered in the woods, and there they breathed their mutual adoration. She to him was all in all, and he to her was like a new divinity. She poured forth all that she long had felt, and scarcely could suppress. From the moment he tore her from the insulter's arms, his image fixed in her heart, and the struggle which she experienced to repel his renewed

vows was great indeed. When she heard of his misfortunes, she had wept; but it was the strange delight she experienced, when his letter arrived to her father, that first convinced her how irrevocably her mind was his.

And now she does not cease to blame herself for all her past obduracy—now she will not for a moment yield that he could have been ever any thing but all that was pure, and beautiful, and good.

CHAPTER XII.

BUT although we are in love, business must not be utterly neglected, and Mr. Dacre insisted that the young Duke should for one morning cease to wander in his park, and listen to the result of his exertions during the last three months. His Grace listened. Rents had not risen, but it was hoped that they had seen their worst; the railroad had been successfully opposed; and coals had improved. The London mansion and the Alhambra had both been disposed of, and well: the first to the new French Ambassador; and the second, to a grey-headed stock-jobber, very rich, who, having no society, determined to make solitude amusing. The pro-

ceeds of these sales, together with sundry sums obtained by converting into cash the stud, the furniture and the *bijouterie*, produced a most respectable fund which nearly paid off the annoying miscellaneous debts. For the rest, Mr. Dacre, while he agreed that it was on the whole advisable that the buildings should be completed, determined that none of the estates should be sold, or even mortgaged. His plan was to procrastinate the termination of these undertakings, and to allow each year itself to afford the necessary supplies. By annually setting aside one hundred thousand pounds, in seven or eight years, he hoped to find every thing completed and all debts cleared. He did not think that the extravagance of the Duke could justify any diminution in the sum which had hitherto been apportioned for the maintenance of the Irish establishments; but he was of opinion, that the decreased portion which they, as well as the western estates, now afforded to the total incomes. was a sufficient reason.

Fourteen thousand a-year were consequently allotted to Ireland, and seven to Pen Bronnock. There remained to the Duke about thirty thousand per annum; but then Hauteville was to be kept up with this. Mr. Dacre proposed that the young people should reside at Rosemount, and that consequently they might form their establishment from the Castle, without reducing their Yorkshire appointments, and avail themselves without any obligation, or even the opportunity of great expenses, of all the advantages afforded by the necessary expenditure. Finally, Mr. Dacre presented his son with his town-mansion and furniture; and as the young Duke insisted that the settlements upon her Grace should be prepared in full reference to his inherited and future income, this generous father at once made over to him the great bulk of his personal property, amounting to upwards of a hundred thousand pounds, and a little ready money, of which he now knew the value.

The Duke of St. James had duly informed his uncle, the Earl of Fitz-pompey, of the intended change in his condition, and in answer received the following letter:—

"Fitz-pompey Hall, May 18—.

"MY DEAR GEORGE,

"YOUR letter did not give us so much surprise as you expected; but, I assure you, it gave us as much pleasure. You have shown your wisdom and your taste in your choice; and I am free to confess, that I am acquainted with no one more worthy of the station which the Duchess of St. James must always fill in society, and more calculated to maintain the dignity of your family than the lady whom you are about to introduce to us as our niece. Believe me, my dear George, that the notification of this agreeable event has occasioned even additional gratification both to your aunt and to myself, from the reflection that you are about to ally yourself with a

family in whose welfare we must ever take an especial interest, and whom we may in a manner look upon as our own relatives. For, my dear George, in answer to your flattering and most pleasing communication, it is my truly agreeable duty to inform you (and, believe me, you are the first person out of our immediate family to whom this intelligence is made known) that our Caroline, in whose happiness we are well assured you take a lively interest, is about to be united to one who may now be described as your near relative, namely, Mr. Arundel Dacre.

" It has been a long attachment, though for a considerable time, I confess, unknown to us; and indeed at first sight, with Caroline's rank and other advantages, it may not appear, in a mere worldly point of view, so desirable a connexion as some perhaps might expect. And to be quite confidential, both your aunt and myself were at first a little disinclined—(great as our esteem and regard have ever been for him)

—a little disinclined, I say, to the union. But Dacre is certainly the most rising man of the day. In point of family, he is second to none; and his uncle has indeed behaved in the most truly liberal manner. I assure you, he considers him as a son; and even if there were no other inducement, the mere fact of your connexion with the family would alone not only reconcile, but, so to say, make us perfectly satisfied with the arrangement. It is unnecessary to speak to you of the antiquity of the Dacres. Arundel will ultimately be one of the richest commoners, and I think it is not too bold to anticipate, taking into consideration the family into which he marries, and, above all, his connexion with you, that we may finally succeed in having him called up to us. You are of course aware that there was once a barony in the family.

"Every body talks of your speech. I assure you, although I ever gave you credit for uncommon talents, I was astonished. So you are to have the vacant ribbon! Why did you not

tell me? I learnt it to-day from Lord Bobbleshim. But we must not quarrel with men in love for not communicating.

"You ask me for news of all your old friends. You of course saw the death of old Annersley. The new lord took his seat yesterday; he was introduced by Lord Bloomerly. I was not surprised to hear in the evening that he was about to be married to Lady Charlotte, though the world affect to be astonished. I should not forget to say that Lord A. asked most particularly after you. For him, quite warm, I assure you.

"The oddest thing has happened to your friend, Lord Squib. Old Colonel Carlisle is dead, and has left his whole fortune, some say half a million, to the oddest person,—merely because she had the reputation of being his daughter. Quite an odd person—you understand me,—Mrs. Montfort. St. Maurice says, you know her; but we must not talk of these things now. Well, Squib is going to be married to her. He says

that he knows all his old friends will cut him when they are married, and so he is determined to give him an excuse. I understand she is a very fine woman. He talks of living at Rome and Florence for a year or two.

"Lord Darrell is about to marry Harriet Wrekin; and between ourselves,—but don't let this go any farther at present,—I have very little doubt that young Pococurante will shortly be united to Isabel. Connected as we are with the Shropshires, these excellent alliances are very gratifying.

"I see very little of Lucius Grafton. He seems ill. I understand, for certain, that her Ladyship opposes the divorce. *On dit*, she has got hold of some letters, through the treachery of her *soubrette*, whom he supposed quite his creature, and that your friend is rather taken in. But I should not think this true. People talk very loosely. There was a gay party at Mrs. Dallington's the other night, who asked very kindly after you.

"I think I have now written you a very long letter. I once more congratulate you on your *admirable* selection, and with the united remembrance of our circle—particularly Caroline, who will write perhaps by this post to Miss D. ——believe me, dear George, your truly affectionate uncle,

"'J. P."

"P. S.—Lord Marylebone is very unpopular —quite a brute. We all miss you."

It is not to be supposed that this letter conveyed the first intimation to the Duke of St. James of the most interesting event of which it spoke. On the contrary, he had long been aware of the whole affair; but I have been too much engaged with his own conduct, to find time to let the reader into the secret, which, like all secrets, it is to be hoped, was no secret. Next to gaining the affections of May Dacre, it was impossible for any event to occur more delightful to our hero than the present. His

heart had often misgiven him when he had thought of Caroline. Now she was happy, and not only happy, but connected with him for life, just as he wished. Arundel Dacre, too, of all men he most wished to like, and indeed most liked. One feeling alone had prevented them from being bosom friends, and that feeling had long triumphantly vanished.

May Dacre had been almost from the beginning the confidante of his cousin. In vain, however, had she beseeched him to entrust all to her father. Although he now repented his past feelings, he would not work upon himself to change; and not till he had entered Parliament and succeeded and gained a name, which would reflect honour on the family with which he wished to identify himself, could he impart to his uncle the secret of his heart, and gain that support without which his great object could never have been achieved. The Duke of St. James, by returning him to Parliament, had been the unconscious cause of all his happiness,

and ardently did he pray that his generous friend might succeed in what he was well aware was his secret aspiration, and that his beloved cousin might yield her hand to the only man whom Arundel Dacre considered worthy of her.

CHAPTER XIII.

Another week brought another letter from the Earl of Fitz-pompey.

THE EARL OF FITZ-POMPEY TO THE DUKE OF ST. JAMES.

[*Read this alone.*]

"MY DEAR GEORGE,

"I beg you will not be alarmed by the above memorandum, which I thought it but prudent to prefix. A very disagreeable affair has just taken place, and to a degree exceedingly alarming; but it might have turned out much more distressing, and, on the whole, we may all congratulate ourselves at the result. Not to keep

you in fearful suspense, I beg to recall your recollection to the rumour which I noticed in my last, of the intention of Lady Aphrodite Grafton to oppose the divorce. A few days back, her brother, Lord Warjston, with whom I was previously unacquainted, called upon me by appointment, having previously requested a private interview. The object of his seeing me was no less than to submit to my inspection the letters, by aid of which it was anticipated that the divorce might be successfully opposed. You will be astounded to hear that these consist of a long series of correspondence of Mrs. Dallington Vere's, developing, I am shocked to say, machinations of a very alarming nature, the effect of which, my dear George, was no less than very materially to control your fortunes in life, and those of that charming and truly admirable lady whom you have delighted us all so much by declaring to be our future relative.

"From the very delicate nature of the disclo-

sures, Lord Wariston felt the great importance of obtaining all necessary results without making them public; and, actuated by these feelings, he applied to me, both as your nearest relative, and an acquaintance of Sir Lucius, and, as he expressed it, and I may be permitted to repeat, as one whose experience in the management of difficult and delicate negotiations was not altogether unknown, in order that I might be put in possession of the facts of the case, advise, and perhaps interfere for the common good.

"Under these circumstances, and taking into consideration the extreme difficulty attendant upon a satisfactory arrangement of the affair, I thought fit, in confidence, to apply to Arundel, whose talents I consider of the first order, and only equalled by his prudence and calm temper. As a relation, too, of more than one of the parties concerned, it was perhaps only proper that the correspondence should be submitted to him.

"I am sorry to say, my dear George, that Arundel behaved in a very odd manner, and not at all with that discretion which might have been expected both from one of his remarkably sober and staid disposition, and one not a little experienced in diplomatic life. He exhibited the most unequivocal signs of his displeasure at the conduct of the parties principally concerned, and expressed himself in so vindictive a manner against one of them, that I very much regretted my application, and requested him to be cool.

"He seemed to yield to my solicitations, but, I regret to say, his composure was only feigned, and the next morning he and Sir Lucius Grafton met. Sir Lucius fired first with effect, but Arundel's aim was more fatal, and his ball was lodged in the thigh of his adversary. Sir Lucius has only been saved by amputation; and I need not remark to you, that to such a man, life on such conditions is scarcely desirable. All idea of a divorce is quite given over. The letter in question

was stolen from his cabinet, by his valet, and given to a *soubrette* of his wife, whom Sir Lucius considered in his interest, but who, as you see, betrayed him.

"For me remained the not very agreeable office of seeing Mrs. Dallington Vere. I made known to her in a manner as little offensive as possible, the object of my visit. The scene, my dear George, was very trying; and I think it very hard, that the follies of a parcel of young people should really place me in such a distressing position. She fainted, &c. and wished the letter to be given up; but Lord W—— would not consent to this, though he promised to keep their contents secret, provided she quitted the country. She goes directly; and I am well assured, which is not the least surprising part of this strange history, that her affairs are in a state of great distraction. The relatives of her late husband are about again to try the Will, and with every prospect of success. She has been negociating with them for some time through

the agency of Sir Lucius Grafton, and the late exposé will not favour her interests.

"If any thing farther happens, my dear George, depend upon my writing; but Arundel desires me to say, that on Saturday he will run down to Dacre for a few days, as he very much wishes to see you and all. With our united remembrance to Mr. and Miss Dacre,

"Ever, my dear George,

"Your very affectionate uncle,

FITZ-POMPEY."

The young Duke turned with trembling and disgust from these dark terminations of unprincipled careers, and their fatal evidences of the indulgence of unbridled passions. How nearly too had he been shipwrecked in this moral whirlpool! With what gratitude did he not invoke the beneficent Providence that had not permitted the innate seeds of human virtue to be blighted in his wild and neglected soul! With what admiration did he not gaze

upon the pure and beautiful being whose virtue and whose loveliness were the causes of his regeneration, the sources of his present happiness, and the guarantees of his future joy.

Four years have now elapsed since the young Duke of St. James was united to May Dacre; and it would not be too bold to declare, that during that period, he has never for an instant ceased to consider himself the happiest and the most fortunate of men. His life is passed in the agreeable discharge of all the important duties of his exalted station, and his present career is by far a better answer to the lucubrations of young Duncan Macmorogh, than all the abstract arguments that ever yet were offered in favour of the existence of an Aristocracy.

Hauteville House and Hauteville Castle proceed in regular course—their magnificent dwellings will never erase simple and delightful Rosemount from the grateful memory of the Duchess of St. James. Parliament and in a degree society, invite the Duke and Duchess each year to the metropolis, and Mr. Dacre

is generally their guest. Their most intimate and beloved friends are Arundel and Lady Caroline;—and as her Ladyship now heads the establishment of Castle Dacre, they are seldom separated. But among their most agreeable company is a young gentleman styled by courtesy Dacre, Marquess of Hauteville; and his young sister, who has not yet escaped from her beautiful mother's arms, and who beareth the blooming title of the Lady May.

Reader! our tale is told, and the sweet shades who for three long weeks have stolen from decay its consciousness, and lent life even to languor, vanish into air. The syllables are sailing on the wind, that are the sting of life. Farewell! Oh! word of woe! Oh! sound of sorrow! and yet the necessary termination of all joy.

THE END.

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